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WILLIAM TROST RICHARDS: Hieroglyphs of Landscape

edited by Jeffery Howe • McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College

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This publication is issued in conjunction with the exhibition *William Trost Richards: Hieroglyphs of Landscape* in the Daley Family Gallery at the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, September 9–December 8, 2019. Organized by the McMullen Museum, *William Trost Richards: Hieroglyphs of Landscape* has been curated by Jeffery Howe and underwritten by Boston College with major support from the Patrons of the McMullen Museum and Mary Ann and Vincent Q. Giffuni.

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Front: William Trost Richards (1833–1905), *Snowy Cliffs, Switzerland*, 1900, watercolor on paper, 5 x 8 in., William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport (plate 152)
Back: William Trost Richards (1833–1905), *Moonlight*, 1878, gouache and watercolor on carpet paper on board, 23.5 x 37.5 in., Collection of Martin and Carolyn Stogniew (plate 179)
Endpapers: William Trost Richards (1833–1905), detail of *Seascape*, 1896, oil on canvas, 31.8 x 50.1 in., private collection (plate 195)

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PREFACE

In 2004 William and Alison Vareika presented the McMullen Museum with a splendid gift; a painting and five drawings by the eminent and prolific American landscape artist William Trost Richards (1833–1905). Since the works' arrival at the McMullen, they have inspired study by Boston College students and faculty alike. One of the professors who took a particular interest in them was Jeffery Howe, a renowned specialist in nineteenth-century painting, who, after retirement from teaching in 2018, decided to focus his research on Richards. In rethinking Richards's contribution to the development of American painting, Howe has curated this monographic exhibition of nearly two hundred of the artist's paintings, watercolors, and drawings. He has chosen works to highlight how Richards's artistic practice conveys his and his contemporary artists' esteem for the natural environment and how Richards used it as a vehicle for scientific, social, and psychological concerns. Intrigued by the prevalence of the metaphor of Egyptian hieroglyphs as a model for decoding the mysteries of nature, which Richards shared with many Romantics and transcendentalists, Howe examines Richards's paintings as examples of such visual language.

Jeffery Howe has spearheaded this project with exceptional originality, discernment, and commitment to scholarly excellence. In the process, he has enticed a notable team of scholars to take a new look at Richards with him and to write essays for this volume. Two are historians of American landscape painting: Linda S. Ferber, director emerita of the New-York Historical Society and a specialist on Richards, and Rebecca Bedell, a professor at Wellesley College, also well known for her publications on American landscape painting. Two have different disciplinary perspectives: Ethan F. Baxter, a geochemist at Boston College who investigates the Earth's materials, and James D. Wallace, a former professor at Boston College who specializes in American literature of the nineteenth century.

In developing the exhibition, Howe worked closely to identify and secure loans with Boston College alumnus William Vareika '74. For nearly forty years William and his wife Alison P'09, '15 have collected Richards's art and also have been the principal gallerists specializing in the artist's work. During this time, the Vareikas developed relationships with several of the artist's descendants. On the occasion of this exhibition, the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant have promised twenty drawings to the McMullen Museum, which were specially selected to represent key aspects of Richards's career examined in the exhibition and to serve future generations of students in studying the artist's contribution as one of nineteenth-century America's premier draftsmen. The Vareikas also encouraged their friends, Alexandria and Michael N. Altman P'22, to donate and promise gifts for the exhibition of works by three important American artists connected to Richards.

At the McMullen Museum, Assistant Director Diana Larsen has designed the galleries to enhance the landscapes' poetic appeal. Assistant Director John McCoy found inspiration in late nineteenth-century American book design and typography, adapting them freely in designing this volume. Manager of Publications and Exhibitions Kate Shugert took on the herculean task of copyediting this volume and of coordinating the loans. Rachel Chamberlain, Manager of Education, Outreach, and Digital Resources, has created a series of innovative programs and events to engage audiences of all ages with the artist's interpretation of landscape and how it reflects current environmental concerns. The collaboration extends throughout the University. The Institute for the Liberal Arts directed by Mary Crane supported related programs; Christopher Soldt of Media Technology Services and Gary Wayne Gilbert provided numerous photographs in the catalogue. Jack Dunn and Rosanne Pellegrini of the Office of University Communications oversaw publicity; Anastos Chiavaras from Boston College's Office of Risk Management and Peter Marino from the Center for Centers aided, respectively, with securing insurance and budgeting. James Husson, Ginger Saariaho, Sally Murray, Barbara Vejvoda, and Ericka Webb of University Advancement helped with funding.

The McMullen is enormously grateful to the institutions and collectors who have agreed generously to lend their treasures to this exhibition. The Museum thanks: Anne and Matt Hamilton; Edward W. Kane and Martha J. Wallace; Martin and Carolyn Stogniew; and many anonymous private lenders; Anne Collins Goodyear, Frank H. Goodyear III, and Laura Latman (Bowdoin College Museum of Art); Anne Pasternak, Elizabeth Largi, and Nancy Rosoff (Brooklyn Museum); Lisa Fischman and Bo K. Mompho (Davis Museum, Wellesley College); Stuart Feld and Elizabeth Feld Herzberg (the Feld Trust); Pieter Roos, Tracy Brindle, and Mallory Howard (Mark Twain House & Museum); Max Hollein, Quincy Houghton, Elizabeth Kornhauser, and Sylvia Yount (Metropolitan Museum of Art); Matthew Teitelbaum, Ethan Lasser, Erica Hirshler, and Janet Moore (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston); James P. Russell and Tony Dumitru (Nantucket Historical Association); Norah Diedrich, Hillary Fortin, and Francine Weiss (Newport Art Museum); Brooke Davis Anderson and Alexander Till (Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts); William and Alison Vareika, Donna Maytum, and Molly Richard (William Vareika Fine Arts).

The McMullen remains grateful for the following Museum endowments that provide vital support for all its projects: Linda '64 and Adam Crescenzi Fund, Janet M. and C.

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As always, the McMullen Museum could never have undertaken this ambitious project without the ongoing support of the administration of Boston College and the McMullen Family Foundation. The Museum especially thanks Jacqueline McMullen; President William P. Leahy, SJ; Provost David Quigley; Vice Provost Billy Soo; and Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences Dean Gregory Kalscheur, SJ. The Peggy Simons Memorial Publications Fund, named in honor of a beloved Museum docent, has partially underwritten this catalogue. Major support for the exhibition was provided by Mary Ann and Vincent Q. Giffuni and the Patrons of the McMullen Museum, chaired by C. Michael Daley, to whom the Museum dedicates this book in appreciation of his leadership for more than two decades.

Nancy Netzer
Inaugural Robert L. and Judith T. Winston Director and Professor of Art History

INTRODUCTION

Jeffery Howe

The art of William Trost Richards (Philadelphia, 1833–Newport, 1905) is primed for critical and popular reexamination. Richards was a highly regarded figure in American art of the second half of the nineteenth century (fig. 1). His style of realist landscape fell out of critical favor in the twentieth century, but the broader focus of postmodernism has rekindled interest in landscape, and reconsideration of realists and Pre-Raphaelites is well underway.

1. William Trost Richards, c. 1900. Photo: William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport.

The exhibition brings together nearly two hundred of his oil paintings, watercolors, and drawings to explore the different facets of his art and career, and to highlight his unique contribution to the development of American art. The catalogue essays combine to tell a new story about Richards and the art of landscape in American culture, and explore the ways in which nature and art convey meaning. Linda S. Ferber is the preeminent scholar on Richards; her essay "*How the Sea Kills the Trees*: William Trost Richards and New Narratives for Marine Painting" deftly illuminates the biography and career of the artist. Rebecca Bedell's "'All the Charm of Loneliness': The Melancholy Art of William Trost Richards" brings a new psychological depth to our understanding of Richards and his art. The cultural context of Richards's art is further explored by James D. Wallace in his essay "Ralph Waldo Emerson on Art: Calvert Vaux, Frederick Law Olmsted, and American Pre-Raphaelitism." Ethan F. Baxter brings his scientific expertise to the analysis of Richards's landscapes with "Every Rock Has a Story: A Geological Journey through the Landscapes of William Trost Richards." My essay "William Trost Richards and the Hieroglyphs of Nature" explores the metaphor of hieroglyphs as a key to interpreting both nature and landscape painting in this era.

For this first major exhibition of the works of William Trost Richards in Boston, we are particularly grateful to William and Alison Vareika, who have championed Richards's art over many decades, and have played a major role in making this exhibition possible. All of the catalogue authors are indebted to the extraordinary scholarship of Linda S. Ferber, whose many books, articles, and catalogues illuminate the art and life of Richards. We are also, of course, indebted to the many lenders, both public institutions and many private collectors, who have generously shared their works with us. Special thanks go to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, which generously shared nearly sixty works with us and to the descendants of William Trost Richards, the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant.

SHAPING A CAREER

"'You had better learn to make shoes,' said the venerable Colonel Trumbull, one day, to a stripling who was consulting him in reference to his choice of painting as a profession, 'better learn to make shoes or dig potatoes than to become a painter in this country.'"[1] John Trumbull's wry comment was ruefully quoted by Asher B. Durand to underscore the challenges faced by artists in America. At mid-career, William Trost Richards shared his discouragement as an artist in a letter to his patron George Whitney: "Be thankful that you are not a painter, and that whatever earnestness there may be in life, is not turned to despair by the unreasonableness and malignity of Art Critics!!"[2]

To succeed in the face of the market challenges lamented by Trumbull and Durand,

William Trost Richards's career combined pragmatism and stubborn idealism. The real need to make money was balanced by his commitment to be true to nature. His friend and biographer Harrison S. Morris observed: "He was a shrewd and careful manager of his own fortunes. He had an uncommon grip on those affairs in his career which brought his elder years into competence and substantial comfort....His alertness in the business of art was not incompatible with the most unflinching adherence to his standards of perfection."[3] His patrons—mostly industrialists and professionals, including noted clergymen—appreciated his strict work ethic and high standards of craftsmanship.

Richards left the Central High School in Philadelphia at fourteen after the death of his father. The Central High School was intended to provide a practical education for its students, and included a drawing curriculum designed by Rembrandt Peale (1778–1860).[4] Peale argued forcefully for the democratic nature of drawing: "Writing is nothing else than drawing the forms of letters. Drawing is little more than writing the forms of objects. Every one that can learn to write is capable of learning to draw; and every one should know how to draw, that can find advantage in writing."[5]

Richards's talent in drawing led to his first regular employment as a draftsman and designer of ornamental metalwork for the firm of Archer, Warner, and Miskey, manufacturers of lamps, gas fixtures, and chandeliers. He worked full time for them from 1850 to 1854, and occasionally afterward until 1858.[6] The intricate designs for these ornamental fixtures are distinguished by the elegant symmetry overlaid with organic shapes in energetic patterns. While working for the metalwork firm in Philadelphia, Richards began to paint and to establish a career. In 1852 he showed two works at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, his first exhibition. One was titled *The House Called Beautiful*, inspired by John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress from This World, to That Which Is to Come* (1678), and the other was *A Morning Dream* (both unlocated).

Even in his teens, drawing was his passion and the foundation of his career. William H. Willcox (c. 1831–after 1912), a friend and fellow painter, remarked: "I had seen some crude pictures which he exhibited at the Art Union Galleries...but was not favorably impressed...but his drawings quite astonished me, and I recognized his talent."[7] Drawing was a vehicle for personal expression, a focus for the study of nature, and the basis of his professional craft. Richards proclaimed his delight in sketching from nature, which provided an escape from the drudgery of commercial design. He described his delight in strolling through the Lansdowne estate outside Philadelphia: "I am fond of solitary walks;—long walks, not through crowded streets or city promenades, but mid wild tangled woods—rough rocky dells—bright sunny hills—pure purling streams—green mossy stones washed by mimic waterfalls;—mid all the beauties that might form a sweet terrestrial paradise, where one might with some choice companion, some spirit stirring poem or some modest sketch book, while away a life time in heartfelt, spiritual enjoyment."[8]

Such a "rocky dell" can be seen in Richards's drawing of *Catskill Clove* in 1853, a close study of rocks in a popular site in the Catskills (plate 16). His interest in geology is already apparent, and his drawing shows a mastery of light and shade, and a convincing rendering of the sculptural forms of the rocky outcropping with its intersecting planes and blocky cubic forms.

Travel in search of artistic inspiration would be a lifelong passion of Richards. His sense of humor and love of travel are expressed in a note to a friend:

> I am happy to inform you that after occasioning much anxiety to all his friends, the "William T Richards, who used to live in our neighborhood" of whom you spoke—has returned to his home after 3 weeks of insane wanderings. From his rambling and incoherent discourse it has been gathered,—that on the 4th of Aug 1853, he left Philadelphia journeying north. That he visited N.Y.—Crystal Palace, —West Point, Catskills, Cauterskill Falls, Catskill mountain Clove. He was seen at the last named places by gentlemen of New York with what seemed a portfolio. Some thought he was an itinerant agent, Preacher, or News Paper Carrier,—and some more shrewdly guessed he was sketching. It is understood that his [*sic*] is now in a fit state to receive and answer all communications.[9]

2. Thomas Cole, *View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm: The Oxbow*, 1836. Oil on canvas, 51.5 x 76 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 08.228.

Richards was following in the footsteps of the artists of the Hudson River School who pioneered landscape painting in the United States.

Romantics such as Thomas Cole (1801–48) had included much natural detail and even practiced painting and sketching out of doors. His *View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts* (fig. 2) shows a naturalistic view of a specific landscape that has been found to be invested with implications about the evolution of the American environment and morality.[10]

Cole was also known for traditional symbolic pictures rooted in concepts of history and religion. His painting of *The Tempter* (1843, plate 9) is a fascinating example. It was originally much larger, and titled *After the Temptation*, or *The Angels Ministering to Christ in the Wilderness*. After negative criticism of the somewhat disjointed composition, Cole cut the painting in half and trimmed the top of the canvas to focus on the image of Satan descending the shadowy mountain after the temptation of Christ. The right side of the painting, which features luminous figures of Christ and ministering angels, is now a separate painting.[11] A digital reconstruction shows an approximation of its original appearance (fig. 3).

Early in his career, Richards attempted a few allegorical compositions in the manner of Cole. In 1854 he finished a now-lost six-foot-wide painting also inspired by Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* titled *The Delectable Mountains*, which he described at length for his friend James Mitchell:

> I...have finished a picture of the Delectable Mountains with the distant Gates of the Celestial City from a sketch made on the spot! This...is my best, I think or rather feel. The Gates are indistinct and luminous in the sky, triple symbolizing the Trinity, the middle the highest and largest in

3. Thomas Cole, *The Tempter*, 1843 (left, plate 9), and *Angels Ministering to Christ* (right, oil on canvas, 74.5 x 60 in., Worcester Art Museum, 1970.118). The two sections are juxtaposed to recreate the original effect.

> the centre of which is the sun radiating its rays seemingly in a cross, from this a golden light is diffused over a landscape various in its forms and far reaching in extent, a valley stretching from the distant foreground widening and widening in the luminous distance, through it caught in glimpses here and there flash the brilliant waters of the River of Life, meandering to the distant land of Beulah, fed by a thousand brooks that sparkle from every part of the landscape, gleaming through the low valley, or dropping silvery threads through the mountains,—on the left hand of the picture, the eye ranges over the multitudinous peaks of the mountains that shut in the valley on this side, resting here in a little lake which sends down its tribute to the shining River, there upon a suntouched rock summit, till it rests far away, many leagues away on the glittering snows of loftier mountains, on the right, rises into the middle of the picture a sunny garden slope, with its luxurious foliage reflected in the water toward which a slender stream falls and pauses, pauses and falls,—behind this rises a great strong rock mountain hung here and there with foliage and it too filled with waterfalls,—all bathed in golden mist.[12]

The symbolism was elaborate, and steeped with Christian iconography. Richards soon developed a simpler, more factual style. In particular, Richards had no affinity for the kind of classical myths that were the staple of academic artists. He confessed to a friend that "I have not yet been able to persuade myself that it is becoming in a true artist to use American Scenery as backgrounds to Cupids and Psyches or Venuses and Adonises—or to adapt the roots of unmistakeable American beeches as a bolster for the heads of questionable nymphs."[13]

Realism and symbolism were the two poles of nineteenth-century art, and in America realism was becoming ever more important.[14] Nonetheless, artists strove to invest their works with symbolic meaning. Richards was among those who sought to combine a detailed naturalism with evocative implications, while moving away from the more melodramatic images of the Sublime favored by Romantics. This exhibition explores the breadth of his artistic achievement, and its roots in almost scientific observation and a spiritual foundation.

In the 1850s, Richards was an intermittent pupil of the German-born artist Paul Weber (Gottlieb Daniel Paul Weber, Darmstadt, 1823–Munich, 1916), who moved to Philadelphia in 1848.[15] Richards studied with him between 1850 and 1855. Weber had few pupils, but William Stanley Haseltine (1835–1900, plate 12) was among them. Weber returned to Germany in 1860, settling in Darmstadt as a court painter. Richards reunited briefly with Weber there in 1867 on a trip abroad, and found him as admirable as ever: "His drawings still seem to me, in their way, the best I know, and he has made some very beautiful and successful water color drawings."[16] Even in Darmstadt, Weber continued to paint American scenes in a naturalistic, detailed style that had clearly inspired Richards.

Richards received his first paid commission in 1854 from the Art Union in Philadelphia to make a painting of George Washington's home at Mount Vernon. The commission coincided with a national campaign then underway to raise funds to purchase the estate for the nation.[17] Richards's drawing for this assignment shows as much if not more interest in the trees in the foreground as in the stately mansion behind them (plate 22).

When he gave up his commercial position with Archer, Warner, and Miskey, Richards shared a studio with fellow artist Alexander Lawrie (1828–1917) in Philadelphia. Local supporters of the two artists raised funds to send them abroad in 1855 to complete their artistic education in Paris, Florence, and Düsseldorf.[18] A Grand Tour of European study was deemed essential to young American artists. After a sketching trip up the Hudson and in the Adirondacks, Richards left for Europe in August 1855. He visited Paris, Switzerland, Lake Maggiore, Genoa, Pisa, and Florence. In the summer of 1856 he returned to Philadelphia to marry Anna Matlack (1834–1900) on June 30. Although her Quaker parents had discouraged the marriage, it lasted until her death in 1900. Their first child was born in 1857, followed by seven more.[19]

He continued to hone his painting skills, following the call for precision and knowledge of botany of the British art critic John Ruskin. This dedication at times overshadowed his short-term financial needs. In the summer of 1858 he spent months working on just one painting, a highly detailed and closely observed *Blackberry Bush* (Brooklyn Museum). Harrison Morris cited it as an example of Richards's perfectionism: "'He painted,' says Mr. Willcox, 'a blackberry bush in the open air, which almost everybody conversant with art in Philadelphia at that period still remembers. Mr. J. R. Lambdin made a sketch at the same time, not far from where Richards was working. A boy, looking at Lambdin's picture, said: 'Mister, how long did it take you to make that?' Lambdin mentioned a few days, when the boy said, 'Good for you; that fellow up there has been all summer over his.'"[20] Richards's painting was exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1859, and was favorably noticed at the Royal Academy exhibition in London the following year.[21]

In 1863 Richards was invited to join the Association for the Advancement of Truth in Art, a New York group founded on the principles of Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites (discussed later in this essay). He was also elected an Academician of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts that year. In 1864 he took on his greatest professional challenge yet, agreeing to paint a seven-by-ten-foot canvas titled *Autumnal Wood* for the New York art dealer Michael Knoedler. Despite the promise of lucrative fees, the overly ambitious work was never finished, and the contract was voided by mutual consent.[22]

Another trip to Europe followed in 1866–67, when he visited the Exposition Universelle in Paris. A sketchbook in our exhibition dates from this trip, and is chiefly filled with scenes of his summer spent in Switzerland (plate 6). In 1874, Richards spent his first summer in Newport, Rhode Island, where he bought a house on Gibbs Avenue in the following year. He began to spend summers in Newport, and winters in Germantown, Pennsylvania.

Further professional recognition followed. He was made a member of the American

Watercolor Society in 1875, and in 1876 he was awarded a bronze medal at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. He also found two major patrons: the Reverend Elias Lyman Magoon (1810–86), a Baptist clergyman; and the industrialist George Whitney (1820–85). His American landscapes met with a good reception, but European scenes continued to be popular with American collectors. Richards proposed to create a series of magazine articles and watercolors set on the Cornish coast.[23] He traveled to England in August 1878, not returning to the US until October 1880. A second sketchbook in our exhibit documents his travels in Britain in 1879–80, with many scenes relating to similar subjects in his watercolors and oil paintings (plate 7). They provide a fascinating window on his interests and creative process.

The 1870s were a period of rapid change in the arts of Europe, with repercussions in the American scene. In France, the impressionists were creating a revolutionary style, and in Britain, artists of the Aesthetic Movement such as James McNeill Whistler were rejecting the tightly defined style of both academic artists and the Pre-Raphaelites. By 1879, Richards was already aware of the changing market. He commented to his friend George Whitney about how incongruous it was to exhibit with Whistler at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1879: "My drawing is hung between two Whistlers—'a harmony in blue and green' and 'a harmony in blue and gold.'...The effect is peculiar an[d] looks like a joke; for my picture is by contrast so exceedingly realistic."[24] His reactions to the new stylistic currents were shown in an earlier letter to Whitney: "I see the reporters have a nice new word 'impressionist!' and it is interesting to find that Lafarge [*sic*] has suddenly metamorphosised (?) into a full blown popular painter! Now Homer Martin's day is coming! and the expressors of the inexpressible will have the glory they have been waiting for."[25]

A revealing letter to Whitney rejects the idea of trying to capture only a first impression in painting: "There is such a sense of strangeness and unreality in everything one sees for the first time, that as a painter I somehow lose hold of the facts that help to produce the impressions, and I have dared to try to paint only those things which I have seen long enough in some way to study."[26]

In the summer of 1882 Richards and his family moved into a new house on Conanicut Island, across from Newport, which he and his wife had designed and built over the previous year. This shingle-style house reflects both his grounding in craftsmanship, and the Arts and Crafts principle that art and life should be merged. The isolated house on a barren rocky cliff provided a perfect base for the artist to study the sea and coast. He named the house Graycliff, and it was featured in many paintings and watercolors (plates 124–27). His friend Harrison Morris recalled it as: "A long shingled house with a roof that tucked it snugly in, with porches overlooking the sea, and walks around about on the rocks, with the rich verdure of that coast running to the friendly threshold, and with its little detached gray studio in hailing distance as you approached it—it stood on a cliff made conspicuous from land and sea by a jagged white streak of quartz running up through the gray rock to the doorway."[27] Richards's fascination with geology was reflected in the choice of site for his home.

Richards owned Graycliff until 1899, when it was demolished by the federal government to build a military fort on the site. Richards had owned a house in Germantown, but sold it in 1884 in exchange for Oldmixon Farm in Chester County. Linda S. Ferber notes that he bought the property to help support his eldest daughter Eleanor and her husband William Price.[28]

Eighteen eighty-five brought Richards additional professional recognition with the award of the Pennsylvania Academy's Temple Silver Medal. His son Theodore was attending Harvard, and the family spent the winter in Cambridge. The death of George Whitney that year was both a personal and professional loss to Richards. Whitney's extensive art collection, including many works by Richards, was sold at auction and prices were depressed as the market was flooded. Richards believed it set him back financially until 1889.[29] The award of a bronze medal at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1889 provided a boost to his career (fig. 4). The award was given for a landscape titled *After a Storm* (unlocated).[30] The review of the exhibition in the *Atlantic Monthly* predicted "a beautiful sea-piece by T. W. Richards [*sic*], and one or two more studies of the same subject by painters not yet famous, gave promise that we shall soon have a fine marine school."[31]

4. Medal awarded to William Trost Richards in 1889 at the Exposition Universelle, Paris. William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport.

In 1890, Richards bought a house on Arnold Avenue in Newport for his winter residence (figs. 5–6). Summers were spent at Graycliff or traveling. He sold Oldmixon Farm in 1891, consolidating his properties. In the summer he traveled to Great Britain and Paris, on the advice of his dealers since the European pictures sold well.[32]

5–6. William Trost Richards's house and studio, 7 (now 16 and 22) Arnold Avenue, Newport. Author's photographs.

Richards's wife Anna died in 1900, and he suffered a slight stroke in 1902. He recovered, however, and continued to paint and travel. Early in 1905 he was awarded the Pennsylvania Academy's Gold Medal of Honor. That summer he made a final trip to the Cornish coast, and died in Newport on November 8. He was buried in Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia.

Architecture was an enduring interest for the practical Richards. He favored the shingle style, a modern format based on natural materials and open interior plans, for the houses he helped plan. Besides designing his own home, Graycliff, he joined late in life with J. S. Lovering Wharton (nephew of the Quaker industrialist Joseph Wharton, founder of the Wharton School) to design a home for Wharton on a rock off Conanicut Island (fig. 7). This was a three-story, twenty-three-room, ten-thousand-square-foot shingle-style cottage designed to withstand hurricane-force winds. The dramatically sited house was appropriately named Clingstone. This house, and Graycliff, made perfect frames for contemplating the spectacular views of the bay and rhythms of the waves.

7. J. S. Lovering Wharton and William Trost Richards, Clingstone, off Conanicut Island, 1905. Author's photograph.

EARLY INTELLECTUAL ASSOCIATIONS

Although his formal education was cut short when he dropped out of high school to help support his family, Richards was intellectually curious and continued to develop his education. Literature was always very important to Richards; in 1848 he and a group of friends in Philadelphia founded a "Literary and Forensic Circle."[33] Richards wrote several early essays in 1851, among them "Sunlight," "Nature's Music," and "The Spirit of Toil."[34] In 1853, Richards planned a publication of twelve drawings to accompany selected poems. To be titled "The Landscape Feeling of American Poets," the series was never completed and he was unable to find a publisher. The surviving drawings, however, show Richards's passion for literature (fig. 8).[35] Indeed, his former pupil and friend Fidelia Bridges wrote that literature was the initial bond between Richards and his future wife Anna Matlack: "It was their mutual interest in Browning, Tennyson and all the poets of the day that drew them together."[36]

8. William Trost Richards, *Landscape Vignette*, n.d. Graphite on heavy paper, 11.6 x 15.3 in., Brooklyn Museum, 72.32.14.

Concerning his illustration for Edgar Allan Poe, Richards wrote: "After considerable difficulty I have finished Dreamland. I know not if Poe (if he were here or looking down from the spirit world from whence it is said he has delivered some communications recently,) would consider it a fair realization of his ideas. I rather fear, he would not."[37] Richards inscribed the following lines from Poe in pencil at the lower right of the sheet: "Dream-Land— / Bottomless vales and boundless floods / Chasms and caves and Titan woods / With forms that no man can discover / For the dews which drip all over— / [line of dashes] / There the traveller meets aghast / Sheeted memories of the Past— / Edgar A. Poe—"

The reference to the spirit world is a reminder of the widespread belief in spiritualism in the nineteenth century. While not unexpected in a work connected to Poe, the promise of mediums to contact the world of the afterlife was a topic of widespread interest.[38] The topic of spiritualism will also be touched on in my essay "William Trost Richards and the Hieroglyphs of Nature" in this volume.

In the mid-1870s, Richards was a participant of the Town and Country Club in Newport, a salon started and presided over by Julia Ward Howe, noted abolitionist and author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."[39] Other members included the son and widow of the geologist Louis Agassiz (1807–73), artist John La Farge (1835–1910), and architect Richard Morris Hunt (1827–95).

CIVIL WAR

Only a few images by Richards directly reflect the trauma of the Civil War, the greatest catastrophe of his lifetime. His *Recruiting Station (Bethlehem)* (by 1862, plate 23) and his sketch for *John Brown's Grave* are the most explicit (1863 or 1864, private collection). The war years were difficult for Richards, as the market for art was severely impacted.[40] The enormous casualties of the war must have also affected Richards. Rebecca Bedell analyzes his predilection for graveyard scenes in this catalogue, and his memorial painting for John Brown is a cold, lonely depiction of his tombstone. The grass on the grave is fresh and green, but the slender tree nearby is barren, and the wheat field is left unharvested under an infinite blue sky. Themes of death are found in his watercolors of graveyards in Newport and England, and are implicit in his paintings of shipwrecks and the deep sea, such as his *Old Ocean's Gray and Melancholy Waste* (see fig. 12, "William Trost Richards and the Hieroglyphs of Nature"). The title is taken from William Cullen Bryant's "Thanatopsis," a poem about mortality.

Linda S. Ferber convincingly suggests that his personal sentiments were encoded in other of his moralizing landscapes such as *A Neglected Corner of the Wheatfield* (see fig. 3, "*How the Sea Kills the Trees*").[41] Wheat fields have been associated with the Union cause; Winslow Homer's *Veteran in a New Field* (1865, fig. 9) combines the natural symbol of the wheat with the figure of the retired soldier with his scythe—an image that looks back to

9. Winslow Homer (1836–1910), *Veteran in a New Field*, 1865. Oil on canvas, 24.1 x 38.1 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 67.187.131.

traditional depictions of the "grim reaper" as well as being a simple portrayal of agricultural work and the return to normalcy.

Richards's earthbound images are understated compared to the cosmic drama of Frederic Church's painting of *Our Banner in the Sky* (1861, fig. 10) that shows the Stars and Stripes formed by the undulating scarlet clouds and the patch of dark blue sky dotted with stars.

10. Frederic Church (1826–1900), *Our Banner in the Sky*, 1861. Oil on paperboard, 7.8 x 11.8 in., De Young Museum, San Francisco, 1994.71.

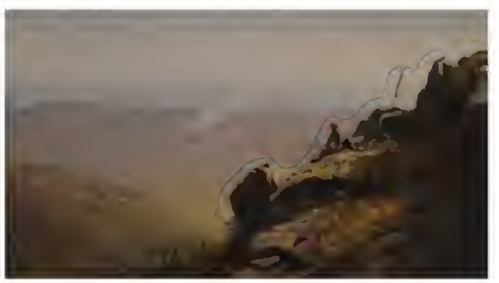
Richards's reticence is worth noting, given that his earliest studio-mate, Alexander Lawrie, enlisted in 1861, and was wounded in 1863. Linda S. Ferber notes that Richards, who was married with two children, did not enlist and was not drafted; he may have paid for a substitute in the military, which was completely legal at that time.[42] After his discharge from the army in 1863, Lawrie made his first trip to the Adirondacks with Richards.[43] Lawrie's diary reflects his affection for Richards: "I leave this beautiful Bolton [near Lake George] tomorrow for Elizabethtown, Essex County, N.Y., where my good friend W. T. Richards, the landscape painter, is." Later that fall he wrote from Elizabethtown that "for the nine weeks here I have worked closely nine hours nearly every day. Out of doors nearly every day with little or no company except W. T. Richards, who has been quite kind to me."[44]

THE NATURE OF REALISM

Precision and closely observed detail characterize Richards's style. American art had long favored the crisp depiction of objective facts, as in the portraits of John Singleton Copley and the landscapes of Frederic Church.[45] His paintings avoid stylistic flourishes that might distract from the scene represented. Unlike the European impressionists, who used broad brushstrokes to call attention to the artifice of their paintings and their individual original styles, Richards's more polished style seemed almost photographic. It was as if he was trying to make a one-to-one correspondence between the observed facts of nature and his marks on the drawing paper or canvas. This illusion of transparency and high degree of finish was found in both the Pre-Raphaelites and academic artists, and came to be associated with the conservative tradition in contrast to the more experimental modernists such as the impressionists.

Landscapes particularly appealed to wealthy merchants and capitalists as Asher B. Durand noted.[46] A landscape painting offered escape from daily cares and anxieties, and reminded the viewers of their youth and places they had seen. Landscape painters became hunters or pilgrims in search of motifs. The need to commune directly with nature took them far afield. Artists were often shown at work while in the field—not just contemplating the beauty and wonder of nature. Winslow Homer and Sanford Robinson Gifford (1823–80), among many others, depicted themselves at work trying to capture the majesty of the mountain vistas (figs. 11–12). The artist at work serves as both a surrogate for the viewer, as well as the artists themselves. The figure gives a sense of scale to the scene, and draws us into the viewing experience. Every noted landscape painter from New York or Philadelphia went on extensive painting trips in the summer in the 1850s; their travels

11. Winslow Homer, "The Artist in the Country," *Appletons' Journal*, June 19, 1869.



12. Sanford Robinson Gifford, *The Artist Sketching at Mount Desert, Maine*, 1864–65. Oil on canvas, 11 x 19 in., National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 2004.99.1.

were regularly reported in the "Domestic Art Gossip" feature of each issue of the *Crayon*.

Drawings by Richards depict his camp stool and easel, part of his gear for painting and sketching outdoors (plate 8). Despite these rare tokens that reveal the presence of the artist in the context of the scenes being depicted, Richards seldom includes figures in his landscapes. A painting by his daughter Anna Richards Brewster made near the end of his life shows Richards happily working out of doors, sitting in the sand, formally dressed

wearing a coat and tie: *W. T. Richards Painting at the Beach, Matunuck, Rhode Island* (plate 4). Painting out of doors was made easier by the invention of paint in tin tubes, which became available in the 1850s. Previously, artists had to contend with paint in jars or small pig bladders, which were much more unwieldy. We are fortunate to have a surviving set of Richards's paints and his palette in our exhibition. Jumbled in a cigar box are his commercial paints from the Hatfield company, and varnishes from Winsor and Newton in a wide variety of colors. A box of his watercolors is preserved at the Brooklyn Museum.

Photography was both a challenge to mid-century artists and a tool to assist their practice. On his first trip to Europe in 1855, Richards wrote from Florence: "I am deterred from sketching, because I can buy very cheaply photographs that are better so far as regards facts than any but the most elaborate sketches."[47] He eventually got his own camera for documenting landscapes and seascapes.[48] Winslow Homer's use of a camera was the focus of a fascinating recent exhibition at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art.[49] J. G. Brown wrote in the *Crayon* in 1857 that "imagination is the camera of the mind," confirming the status of photography as a benchmark of realism.[50]

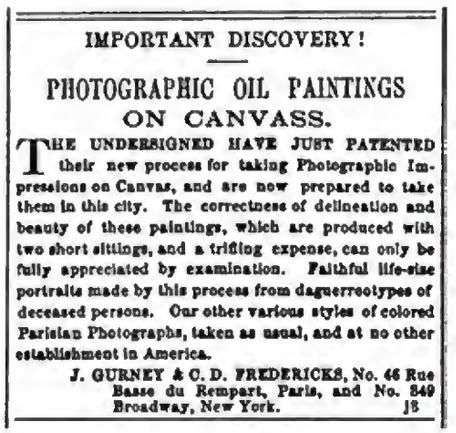
Daguerreotypes soon replaced miniature portraits for the middle classes, and even some entrepreneurs promised photographic oil paintings on canvas (fig. 13). In the popular mind, and for many artists, the photograph became the new standard for testing the accuracy of the artist's vision. In 1864, John Ruskin's detailed watercolor study of a block of gneiss was approvingly compared to a photograph by the Pre-Raphaelite inspired journal the *New Path*.[51] However, the personality of the artist was still deemed essential to making a work of art transcend a mere mechanical imitation of reality. Just as musical performance required the emotion and talent of the musician to rise above the rote indications of the score, painting required the infusion of the personality of the artist to create a masterpiece.[52] In fact, too much accuracy ran the risk of deceiving the viewer; the famous story of the competition between Zeuxis and Parrhasios to see who could fool the other with their trompe l'oeil paintings was held up as a case of dishonesty, not a feat to be emulated.[53] Artists were forced to navigate between these competing demands, and find their own personal style while still satisfying the desire for accurate depictions.

Photography was just one of the new technologies that transformed art and the definitions of realism. This was the era of telegraphy and railroads, which seemed to annihilate old concepts of distance and isolation. The railroad made it much easier for landscape artists to get to new locales. Telegraph lines linked distant sites; the first successful transatlantic cable was laid in 1858, allowing for simultaneous communication with Great Britain. These revolutionary technologies contributed to the experience of modernity, as traditional assumptions were challenged, and social customs and institutions were disrupted. Artists found themselves in a new world where, in the famous phrase of Karl Marx, "All that is solid melts into air."[54] In the face of this modern world, Richards sought consolation in nature and its less frenetic time frames. As both Linda S. Ferber and Rebecca Bedell underscore, however, there is a strong undertone of melancholy and loss in many of his works.

The *New Path* listed the new realist style in art as one of the radical transformations that had forever changed modern society since the eighteenth century, starting with the French Revolution and the disruption caused by new scientific discoveries. The arts were part of this cultural revolution: "The modern school of realists, though numerically small, is yet beginning to be felt formidable by the adherents to tradition and conventionality, and the assertion of its principles threatens no less than the life of the popular system."[55] The conventional belief that art was meant only to please the viewer was replaced with a commitment to moral and intellectual uplift: "The only worthy aim of Art is to enlighten and instruct the mind concerning the precious truth, beauty and loveliness which cannot be expressed by any other means." The idea that art should be primarily based on truthful perception and observation was radical; Joshua C. Taylor notes that it "was a kind of purgation, getting rid of the past to start anew."[56]

Although some American artists such as William Morris Hunt (1824–79) and John La Farge were inspired by Gustave Courbet (1819–77) and other artists of the Barbizon School, the French realist was seldom mentioned in the pages of the *Crayon* or the *New Path*, which favored British art. Ironically, it was William Michael Rossetti who called attention to Courbet, who took part in an exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London in 1856: "One of the appearances here most curious and interesting for the untravelled Englishman is that of Courbet, the French realist—who, with a style and system very different from those of the Pre-Raphaelites, yet has started an innovation, and occupies a position, in his own country, somewhat analogous to that of the Pre-Raphaelites in our's [*sic*]."[57]

Realism for Richards meant a faithful reproduction of the things of the world with a scrupulous attention to observed detail to create a convincing representation of the appearance of material reality. It did not mean, however, depictions of scenes of social realism like the abject portrayals of poverty and hard labor that characterized European realism of the same time.[58] Nor did he depict the industrial desecrations of the landscape that were increasing after mid-century. He painted bucolic scenes of the Pennsylvania landscape where he grew up, and never rendered the environmental disasters of the oil prospecting boom that were emerging. In contrast, David Gilmour Blythe's (1815–65) sharply satirical painting *Prospecting/Bullcreek City* paints a dire picture of the fate of the land when commercial interests triumph (fig. 14), the dark side of commercial progress. There is a dark undertone to many of Richards's landscapes, however. Linda S. Ferber and Rebecca Bedell both note the existential nature of Richards's pessimistic paintings of trees drowning on the ocean shore, exemplified by the lost painting *How the Sea Kills the Trees*.



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13. Advertisement in the *Crayon* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 3, 1855): 16.

14. David Gilmour Blythe, *Prospecting/Bullcreek City*, c. 1864–65. Oil on canvas, 12.3 x 9 in., Westmoreland Museum of American Art, Greensburg, 2015.20.

AN AMERICAN PRE-RAPHAELITE

Detailed realism infused with moral passion and spiritual values characterized the Pre-Raphaelite movement, which proposed to move art forward by looking back to the Middle Ages for inspiration. First emerging in Britain, the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic soon inspired American artists, including Richards. In 2019 the American Pre-Raphaelites

were the focus of a fascinating exhibition at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.[59]

The history of the Pre-Raphaelites begins with a group of very young artists who came together in 1848 to revolutionize British art. They called themselves the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood to signal their desire to return to a purified artistic style rooted in the fidelity to nature that they found in art before Raphael and the idealism of the High Renaissance. The rise of photography also influenced their highly detailed style.[60] In their first years, the group was united in creating symbolic allegories that were scrupulously realistic, but which also carried a moral message. As with Jan van Eyck's picture known as *The Arnolfini Wedding* (1432), which had recently entered the National Gallery of Art's collection in London, they sought to use real objects in allegorical compositions, akin to what Erwin Panofsky called "disguised symbolism," wherein the whole world shines with symbolic meaning.[61] To cite just one example, William Holman Hunt's painting of *The Hireling Shepherd* (1851, Manchester Art Gallery) is a symbolic landscape inspired by van Eyck and other Flemish artists.[62] Their other heroes were the "primitives" like Giotto and fifteenth-century artists in Italy and Flanders. The goal was a new art of authenticity and direct contact with nature, bolstered by insights derived from science. Landscape was only part of the British Pre-Raphaelite movement, but it became central to American artists influenced by them.

The strongest advocate for the British Pre-Raphaelites was John Ruskin (1819–1900), the most important art critic of the nineteenth century. Ruskin was hugely influential in England, and equally so in America. His art criticism favored artists who were both highly detailed, and highly moralizing. The first volume of John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* was published in London in 1843, with a US edition in 1847. It forcefully celebrated the art of J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851). He followed it with a small book on his new favorites, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, in 1851. He stressed that the Pre-Raphaelites were carrying on the legacy of his first writings on art: "Eight years ago, in the close of the first volume of 'Modern Painters,' I ventured to give the following advice to the young artists of England: 'They should go to nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thought but how best to penetrate her meaning; rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing.'"[63]

15. Cover to the *Crayon* 3, no. 2 (Feb. 1856).

Pictures such as *In the Woods* (1860, plate 26), *Flora* (1859, plate 25), and *Sunset on the Meadow* of 1861 (see fig. 5, "Ralph Waldo Emerson on Art") reveal that Richards was a master of this nearly photographic style.[64] Each small corner of nature is treated as a microcosm of the larger universe. Many small drawings further demonstrate his careful studies of natural forms (plates 27–30).

Ruskin's influence inspired new publications in America. The *Crayon: A Journal Devoted to the Graphic Arts and the Literature Related to Them*,[65] was the first important art journal, published in New York between 1855 and 1861. Edited by William James Stillman (1828–1901) and John Durand (1822–1908), son of Asher B. Durand, it advocated for the principles of "truth to nature" and art that featured clear and honest portrayals of nature, as recommended by Ruskin. Although the journal did not publish illustrations, the cover of volume three in February 1856 featured a personification of Art seated on a cloud, surrounded by tracings of art and architecture from past eras (fig. 15).[66] Flanked by images from Egypt, Greece, and Rome, the twin towers of a Gothic cathedral rise behind her head. This somewhat forced allegorical image clearly expressed the period's belief in progress, with mid-nineteenth-century Christian art at the summit of past eras and cultures. The *Crayon* ceased publication with the disruption caused by the Civil War.

In the 1850s, the paintings of William James Stillman exemplified Ruskin's call for artists to focus closely on natural observation and detail. His *Study on Upper Saranac Lake* presents a naturalistic view of the lake viewed between pines, with both close-up details and distant vistas rendered clearly (plate 11). As with Jan van Eyck, he seems to have painted with both a telescope and a magnifying glass.[67] In later decades, Stillman focused his career on photography and journalism.[68]

The Pre-Raphaelite movement was marked by a commitment to moral values as well as artistic integrity. "Truth to nature" was their byword, and in 1863 a British immigrant and disciple of Ruskin, Thomas Charles Farrer (1839–91), founded the Association for the Advancement of Truth in Art.[69] Richards was voted into this association later that year. The group founded a journal whose title embraced the sense of renewal in the arts: the *New Path*, edited by the critic Clarence Cook, was published between 1863 to 1865.[70] The articles of organization for the association amounted to a declaration of Ruskinian principles. Article one proclaimed: "We hold that the primary object of Art is to observe and record truth, whether of the visible universe or of emotion. All great Art results from an earnest love of the beauty and perfectness of God's creation, and is the attempt to tell the truth about it."[71] Their affiliation was made clear with the coda: "We hold that...the Pre-Raphaelite School is founded on the principles of eternal truth." Founded during the Civil War, this reform association was also committed to anti-slavery principles and the preservation of the Union.[72]

John Ruskin was equally influential as an architecture critic in both Britain and America. The editors of the *Crayon* and the *New Path* included many articles endorsing the English critic's principles. Ruskin's books *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (London: Smith, Elder, 1849) and *The Stones of Venice* (London: Smith, Elder, 1851–53) promoted a modernized Gothic style that he believed best expressed the values of Christian morality and nature. "The Lamp of Memory" was one of the key chapters of his *Seven Lamps of Architecture*. His prescriptions for architects were as much cultural and moral as technical, and he insisted that modern architecture should be grounded in the best traditions of the past.

As a visible expression of the values of a society, architecture was deemed essential to cultural memory and identity. Nearly all major art museums and establishments in America at mid-century were built in the High Victorian Gothic style that Ruskin championed and that is still today often called Ruskinian. Examples include the National Academy of Design (1861–65) in New York City, the first representative of this style in the US (fig. 16). Designed by Peter Bonnet Wight (1838–1925), it reflects Ruskin's

favorite Venetian Gothic with a façade inspired by the Doge's Palace, and was hailed by the *New Path* as the first to match their ideals of revived and modernized medieval craftsmanship.[73] Richards often exhibited there. Although nineteenth-century medievalism is sometimes associated with conservative aristocratic nostalgia, it also reflected a call for a return to the humane and spiritual values of a pre-industrial age.[74]

16. Peter Bonnet Wight, "View of the National Academy of Design," 1861–65, New York City (demolished 1901). *Harper's Weekly* 9, no. 440 (June 3, 1865): 548.

MEMORY AND AMERICAN IDENTITY

Many commentators, including Thomas Cole and William Cullen Bryant, cited the lack of ruins and historical monuments in the United States as the reason that European settings were more picturesque, offering greater opportunities for artists. Nonetheless, in the years leading up to and following the Civil War, there was increasing attention to the sites associated with the American Revolution. As noted above, Richards's first commission was to paint and draw George Washington's home at Mount Vernon (plate 22). The link of American identity and nature was reinforced by the homage to trees associated with historic events. Richards commemorated the American Revolution again with a small watercolor of *The Elm under Which Washington First Took Command of the Continental Army, Cambridge, Massachusetts* (1886, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts).

Richards focused on particular places again and again in his art, deepening his knowledge of the scenery and developing his craft. Newport was to become one of his main genius loci, along with Pennsylvania, the Adirondacks, and the White Mountains. His frequent depictions of the area around Newport were energized by local history as well as the drama of nature. The watercolor "coupon" of the *Old House on Conanicut Island* (1876, plate 58) embodied the picturesque appeal of an old saltbox farmhouse on the island where he would build his home. Ethan F. Baxter, Rebecca Bedell, and Linda S. Ferber all illuminate Richards's fascination with the deep time of geology, and the new understanding of the history of the American continent. A dramatic picture such as *The Otter Cliffs* (1866, plate 173) evokes a primal sense of geologic history.

EUROPEAN LITERARY AND HISTORICAL LANDSCAPES

Richards was an enthusiastic traveler, and in his many trips to Europe he sought scenes of historic places as well as natural beauty. He created many watercolors of sites associated with British history, especially ruined abbeys and castles, which were often popularized by the Romantic poets of his era. As emblems of past glories and the inevitable fading of human endeavors, ruins open a dialogue with the past and offer lessons for current aspirations.

The legend of King Arthur was central to the mythic foundation of Britain, and was celebrated by the poetry of the poet laureate Alfred, Lord Tennyson, and artists associated with the Pre-Raphaelite movement. Richards made many paintings and drawings of Tintagel, the supposed birthplace of King Arthur in Cornwall (plates 67, 102–4, 170). One of the most impressive is *The League Long Breakers Thundering on the Reef* (1887, plate 169). Richards knew that the historic evidence for Arthur's legend was scant, but the site was noteworthy for its scenic beauty as well as historical significance. The artist described this his first visit to this site in a letter: "Our first sight of King Arthur's castle was by twilight on a cloudy day. There was light enough to let us get down over the rocks to the little beach where a heavy sea was running, the tide was half out. The breakers were rushing through the caves with a sound more melancholy than anything I ever heard, making a great wind as they passed....I wish I could in any way give the impression of size and height, and the added power of the sea."[75] The landscape absorbs human history, and outlasts it. The presence of many fossils along the Jurassic coast enlarged the time frame, and the deep time of geology further reduced the scale of human history. As Rebecca Bedell notes in her essay in this volume, paleontology was a keen interest of Richards and his family.

Richards's patron, Rev. Magoon, was enthusiastic about these British scenes, which corresponded to his vision of human history and progress. He commissioned a series of seven watercolors that embodied phases of British history from prehistoric times to the present, with titles denoting their significance: *Mythical England, Stonehenge*; *Legendary England, Tintagel*; *Monastic England, Tintern Abbey*; *Romantic England, Richmond*; *Scholastic England, Oxford*; *Commercial England, London*; and *Regal England, Windsor*. Richards found the task difficult, but felt that they were "perhaps as important as any water color drawings I have made."[76]

The mysterious ruins of Stonehenge represented the pagan origins of Britain, with its powerful architecture a witness from the dim mists of a prehistoric era. Richards described the traces of time in its haunting presence in 1878: "We spent two days near Stonehenge....I had it on my mind and it took that long to work it off!...Stonehenge is more interesting than I had thought it would be; partly because of its lonely situation in the middle of a wide undulating grassy plain....It has that pathetic look peculiar to all human work which has reverted to Nature. Architectural enough to be a ruin, and as rude and moss covered as though ages ago it had been left by some glacier."[77] This emotional connection to nature was typical of the Romantic poets he admired. We have a small watercolor "token" or "coupon" of Stonehenge in our exhibition (plate 71), and there is a sketch of the monument in the 1879 sketchbook. There are also large finished watercolors of Stonehenge in the collections of the Brooklyn Museum and Vassar College.

TOURISM IN THE MODERN ERA—ECONOMICS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Richards took extensive and often lengthy trips to find subjects and inspiration for his art. He was part of the transition from the earlier aristocratic Grand Tour tradition to the modern mode of tourism. Over the years, he traveled to the mountains and shores of the East Coast, including Pennsylvania, the Hudson River Valley, the Adirondacks, the White Mountains, Nantucket, Mount Desert, Maine, the New Jersey shore, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Newport, as well as Tacoma, Washington. His European travels included Italy, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, France, England, Scotland, Ireland, and

Norway. The growth of landscape painting in America parallels the growth of cities, and the development of improved transportation. The new technologies of steamships and railroads made travel to the Hudson River and the Adirondacks much more accessible.[78]

Although the United States lacked the castles and ancient ruins of Europe, Thomas Cole insisted that the wildness of the American landscape brought its own distinct beauty.[79] The unspoiled aspect of the landscape was one of its most precious qualities, and would eventually be recognized in preservation movements.[80]

17. William Trost Richards, *Lake Squam from Red Hill,* 1874. Watercolor, gouache, and graphite on paper, 8.9 x 13.6 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 80.1.6.

Richards visited the White Mountains frequently, traveling with Rev. Magoon in 1872.[81] His vibrant watercolor of Lake Squam from the top of Red Hill, donated by Magoon to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1880, captures the deep space and sunset glow in the sky (fig. 17). This panoramic viewpoint has been associated with ideologies of dominance and manifest destiny, but is also a sign of wonder at the grandeur of nature.[82] Alan Wallach notes that the panoramic vista was a new and modern mode of vision in the nineteenth century.[83] The elevated viewpoint and seemingly limitless space shows an almost transcendental view of nature. It is an unmediated spectacle, with no trace of the artist or other humans, a beautiful but lonely scene. The viewer is absorbed into the contemplation of the landscape, not unlike Ralph Waldo Emerson's famous metaphor of becoming a "transparent eyeball" (see fig. 4, "William Trost Richards and the Hieroglyphs of Nature").[84]

WATERCOLOR—CELEBRATING A NEW MEDIUM

Although Richards was very skilled in painting in oils, many of his finest works are watercolors. Watercolor became an increasingly important medium in nineteenth-century art in America and Europe. At the beginning of the century, British artists capitalized on the portability and luminosity of watercolor to break out of the studio and paint freshly observed landscapes out of doors. J. M. W. Turner was the best known of these, and was frequently praised by Richards. The British Society of Painters in Water-Colours was founded in 1805, followed by the New Society of Painters in Water-Colours in 1832. By mid-century the medium found international popularity, and the New York Water Color Society was founded in 1850. The American Society of Painters in Water Colors was also founded in New York City in 1866; Richards became a member of this group in 1874. In 1876 the name was shortened to the American Watercolor Society.

Many of Richards's watercolors were highly detailed, although some show more freedom in his brushwork, especially the small "coupons" which are more personal, and more fluid. He recognized that too much detail could deaden the work. Even John Ruskin, the champion of hard-edged accuracy, recognized the need for artistic freedom and fluency in art: "The freedom of the lines of nature can only be represented by a similar freedom in the hand that follows them."[85] Richards's watercolors were often small, sometimes combined with pencil or on at least one occasion, paper collaged onto the page depicting the Cornish Lions, rock formations in Cornwall (plate 45). Linda S. Ferber notes that in 1876 Richards began to work more with solid colors such as gouache or Chinese white, a non-darkening zinc oxide, in his watercolors, giving the images more definition.[86]

There is an important group of tiny miniatures—all are about three-by-five inches in size. Over two hundred of these were sent to George Whitney, many enclosed in letters. Whitney called these "coupons" or "tokens."[87] These intimate works represent a kind of diary of Richards's thoughts and works, and draw the viewer into an intimate relationship since one has to approach closely to appreciate them. Some were painted outdoors on the spot, others drawn from memory in the artist's study. They depict scenes in New England, Pennsylvania, and from his European travels. Some were explicitly labeled as sketches for works he intended to complete, and they all served to maintain his bonds with his patrons. We are fortunate to have fifty-six of these in our exhibition, generously lent by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia (plates 50–105). Rev. Magoon and George Whitney were among the enthusiastic collectors of Richards's watercolors. Magoon donated eighty-five watercolors by Richards to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1880, writing: "Let us begin with a *Richards Gallery* for America, all that the Turner [Gallery] is for England."[88]

Many of his watercolors in the late 1870s were created on a thick gray paper that was a commercial product for lining carpets. Richards found it very economical; his friend William Willcox remembered that "Mr. Richards...devoted considerable time to landscape in body watercolor upon a gray paper, which was used for lining carpets, and cost but a few cents a yard...and was fond of saying, that he got his paper so cheap, he could afford to use more water."[89] This carpet paper came on long rolls, so he could cut it to whatever dimensions he chose: "I keep the roll of 'carpet paper' going and the big drawings are of bigger and bigger subjects."[90] Examples of watercolors on this carpet paper include *Paradise Valley, Middletown, Rhode Island* (1877, plate 122), *Haying near Newport Beach* (1877, plate 121), *Moonlight* (1878, plate 179), and *The Clearing Storm* (1879, plate 192).

Watercolor exploded in popularity as a medium between 1750 and 1900, and the sheer number of watercolors produced in this era by both professional and amateur artists has led to the creation of an online research archive in Britain that seeks to link historic images with changes brought about by environmental factors.[91] Coastlines and glaciers are a particular focus, given their vulnerability to climate change. The number and quality of Richards's British views suggest that he could play an important part in this research.

SEASONS—BEAUTY AND MORTALITY

Time and the cycles of the seasons have long intrigued artists. Thomas Cole's allegorical pair of paintings, *Past* and *Present* (1838, Mead Art Museum at Amherst College) and his series of *The Course of Empire* (1833–36, New-York Historical Society) traced the historical evolution of empires and individual humans. Late medieval illuminated calendar pages and Pieter Brueghel's sixteenth-century paintings of the four seasons are notable examples that focus on seasonal activities and weather. Contemporaneous with Richards, the impressionist Claude Monet focused intensely on nature in its varied seasons and

moments, emphasizing a modernist instantaneity. Thomas Cole declared: "There is one season when the American forest surpasses all the world in gorgeousness—that is the autumnal;—then every hill and dale is riant in the luxury of color—every hue is there, from the liveliest green to deepest purple—from the most golden yellow to the intensest crimson."[92]

We see this in Richards's *Autumn Leaves*, a watercolor of c. 1870 (plate 147). He also captured the beauty of early spring in his oil sketch of *Orchard in Spring* (plate 145), and the golden beauty of *Early Summer* (1888, plate 146). For George Whitney, Richards painted a quartet of paintings of the seasons. *Winter* (1867, private collection) shows a beautiful woodland scene where the evergreens are frosted with new-fallen snow, and the bare deciduous trees form intricate patterns against the reddening sky of sunset.[93] *Autumn* has also resurfaced, but *Spring* and *Summer* have not been located. Our exhibition includes a pair of studies of Easton's Point in Newport, Rhode Island, in autumn and winter (plates 148–49). Linda S. Ferber reminds us in her essay in this catalogue that Richards's majestic painting of *February* (1887, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts) was at least in part an elegy for his recently deceased patron and friend, George Whitney.

TREES—SENTINELS OF THE SACRED GROVE

Trees were a special interest of Richards; many of his earliest sketches depict either single trees, or groves. A graphite drawing dated June 1853 is one of many that captures the burgeoning growth of the crown of a single leafy tree (plate 107). In his depiction of a *Woodland Scene*, a small stream shaded by dense trees captures the dynamism of the natural forces of earth and water (plate 120). Like the poet William Cullen Bryant, Richards believed that "the groves were God's first temples."[94] Richards found solace in forests, from his first youthful walks in Fairmount Park and hikes in the Adirondacks, to his portrayals of ancient British woods. Like many Romantics, he found trees to be compelling surrogates for his own identity, animate and almost sentient.

Richards generally preferred trees that showed some signs of suffering or struggle, as he felt these showed more character: "When a tree grows in an open space in perfect freedom from the first—we may say it is a fine tree but we can never think of it as picturesque or as having had any experience....These we never selected as best for pictures...only those which are twisted and curved and give evidence of a fight for their lives—(There is a possibility of giving too much fight and there the result is distortion and ugliness)."[95] Rebecca Bedell and Linda S. Ferber delve deeply into Richards's use of trees as emblems of the struggle for existence, most notably in his unlocated watercolor *How the Sea Kills the Trees* (1875).

American trees were his first interest, but he responded with enthusiasm to the splendid trees in British aristocratic parks, finding them equally noble: "In the parks which have always been the property of the dukes & kings, the trees have become monarchs too, and I can not render the strange sense as of a dream with which I remember the old twisted oaks and the deer."[96]

MOUNTAINS—THE DRAMA OF GEOLOGY

Paintings of mountains, and all landscapes, are necessarily abstract. The artist's canvas or sketchpad is infinitely smaller than the subject depicted. This is obvious when we consider a painting of the Alps (plate 152), but is also true even when the subject is a small corner of nature. The work of art can only create a sign that reminds the viewer of the scene depicted. The illusion of vastness is a fiction, and may evoke a sense of the Sublime, picturesque, or beautiful. In creating the fictive image, the artist may begin with direct impressions, but alter them or make composites to create a more pleasing image. Richards was endlessly fascinated with the spectacular scenes of mountain vistas, and sought his subjects in the Catskills, the White Mountains of New Hampshire, the Alps, and Apennines. Even after 1900, he continued to paint such dramatic scenes as the *Snowy Cliffs, Switzerland* and the *Brikdal Glacier* in Norway (plates 152, 156).

The *Crayon* asserted that every landscape painter since Leonardo was a geologist, even if unintentionally.[97] Richards expressed his interest in geology in a letter of 1854 to James Mitchell: "I almost envy your geological Surveys with Prof. Agassiz. I have long been wishing to study in an Elementary Manner Geology. Can you tell me of any thoroughly good book; I must make it part of my discipline for the winter."[98] Rebecca Bedell notes that Richards's enthusiasm was passed on to his children; their hand-drawn family journal *Our Own Monthly* includes numerous descriptions of geological sites and quotations from geology texts in the early 1880s. His son Theodore, who was the first American to win a Nobel Prize in chemistry, explored the chemistry of geology and is acknowledged as a forerunner by contemporary geologists, including Ethan F. Baxter at Boston College.

Geologists were key in bringing a revolutionary knowledge of change and instability to an understanding of the world. An early textbook declared: "In short, geology has given us a glimpse of a great principle of *instability*, by which the *stability* of the universe is secured; and at the same time, all those movements and revolutions in the forms of matter essential to the existence of organic nature are produced. Formerly, the examples of decay so common everywhere were regarded as defects in nature; but they now appear to be an indication of wise and benevolent design—a part of the vast plans of the Deity for securing the stability and happiness of the universe."[99]

Richards's beautiful watercolor, *Moonlight on Mount Lafayette, New Hampshire* of 1873 (plate 135) shows the majestic White Mountain peak bracketed by two tall trees, silhouetted against the moonlit sky. A flowing stream is illuminated with silvery reflections, leading the viewer's eye back to the misty mountains and full moon above. The image combines different temporal elements, from the times of day to the monthly phases of the moon, the instantaneity of the flowing stream, the seasonal summer foliage of the trees, and the deep time of the mountain range. Glaciers, which were a chief study for Agassiz, represent an intermediate state of solidity—frozen, yet constantly moving and subject to melting, as is only too clear in our current climate.[100] Richards's paintings *Sunset on Mount Chocorua* (1873) and *Summer Glow (Mount Lafayette from Coffin Pond, New Hampshire)* of 1877 combine the deep time of geology and the experiential time of the seasons (plates 134, 136).

COASTAL SCENES—SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL

Toward the end of his life, Richards was enchanted by the ever-changing spectacle of the sea and the majesty and power of mountains and glaciers, capturing them in many extraordinary paintings and watercolors. He was widely recognized as one of the most successful painters of marine scenes of his generation. One of his first seascapes, *Nantucket Shore* (plate 24) was painted during the summer he spent on the island in 1865. Graycliff, built on a rocky promontory facing Newport, gave him a perfect perch to observe nature and the drama of the sea, and to portray the constantly changing spectacle in his carefully crafted paintings and drawings. To capture the eternal contest of surf and rock was an obsessive challenge for him, seen in stunning depictions of the Atlantic coast in New Jersey, Newport, and Maine, and in the primal coasts of Britain and Scotland. The dynamic images of crashing surf will be a focus of my essay "William Trost Richards and the Hieroglyphs of Nature" later in this catalogue.

1 Asher B. Durand, "Letters on Landscape Painting" (letter 4), *Crayon* 1, no. 7 (Feb. 14, 1855): 97.

2 WTR to George Whitney, Mar. 14, 1879, London. Quoted in Linda S. Ferber, *William Trost Richards (1833–1905): American Landscape and Marine Painter* (New York: Garland, 1980), 304.

3 Harrison S. Morris, *Masterpieces of the Sea: William T. Richards; A Brief Outline of His Life and Art* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1912), 9–10.

4 Amy Werbel, *Thomas Eakins: Art, Medicine, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 26.

5 Rembrandt Peale, *Graphics: A Manual of Drawing and Writing, for the Use of Schools and Families* (New York: J. P. Peaslee, 1835), 6.

6 Linda S. Ferber, *"Never at Fault": The Drawings of William Trost Richards* (Yonkers: Hudson River Museum, 1986), 8.

7 W. H. Willcox, quoted in Morris, *Masterpieces of the Sea*, 20.

8 WTR, "Lansdowne," in *Humbly Dedicated to Marie*, 1850–51, manuscript, 12–14. William Trost Richards Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC (hereafter WTR Papers, AAA, searchable online at https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/william-trost-richards-papers-5663).

9 WTR, letter of Aug. 28, 1853. WTR Papers, AAA.

10 Jerome Tharaud, "Evangelical Space: *The Oxbow*, Religious Print, and the Moral Landscape in America," *American Art* 28, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 52–75.

11 Rev. Louis L. Noble, *The Life and Works of Thomas Cole* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman, 1856), 349–50, describes the work when it was still whole. The other portion of the painting is now conserved at the Worcester Art Museum. See Louisa Dresser, "A Scriptural Subject by Thomas Cole: Two Sections Reunited," *Worcester Art Museum News and Bulletin* 36 (Feb. 1971): n.p.

12 WTR to James Mitchell, May 24, 1854, Philadelphia. Quoted in Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 29.

13 WTR to James Mitchell, Apr. 27, 1854, Philadelphia. Quoted in Ferber, 40.

14 Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Image and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880–1940* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press), 1989.

15 Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 12–15 and *passim*.

16 WTR to Earl Shinn, Feb. 4, 1867, Darmstadt. Quoted in Ferber, 185.

17 Jean B. Lee, "Historical Memory, Sectional Strife, and the American Mecca: Mount Vernon, 1783–1853," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 109, no. 3 (2001): 255–300.

18 Linda S. Ferber, *Pastoral Interlude: William T. Richards in Chester County* (Chadds Ford: Brandywine River Museum, 2001), 21.

19 The Richardses' children were: Archer Ellis Richards (1857–1922), an architect and designer; Charles Matlack Richards (1858–65); Eleanor French Richards (1862–1954), who married William Farmer Price (1860–1937); Theodore William Richards (1868–1928); Anna Mary Richards Brewster (1870–1952), a painter and book illustrator; Herbert Maule Richards (1871–1928), a professor of botany at Harvard and Barnard College; and Josephine Anna Richards (1864–65) and Mildred Richards (1879–80), who died in infancy.

20 Morris, *Masterpieces of the Sea*, 10–11.

21 W. J. Stillman, "Foreign Correspondence, Items, Etc.," *Crayon 7*, no. 7 (July 1860): 202: "The only work by an American artist that we have seen any allusion to by the English press is a study, called 'Blackberry Bush,' by Richards, of Philadelphia."

22 Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 205n14: "This agreement witnesseth that William T. Richards of Phila. contracts to paint a picture of Autumnal Wood 7 by 10 ft. more or less; for which picture M. Knoedler of New York agrees to pay the sum of Two Thousand Five Hundred (2500) dollars in Quarterly instalments of Five Hundred dollars ($500) after said picture is actually commenced. For which instalments William T. Richards agrees to give due bills payable with lawful interest 90 days after the last instalment shall have been paid, if the picture is not delivered to M. Knoedler at that time; unless otherwise agreed upon. It is also hereby agreed that if the picture is sold by M. Knoedler or agent for more than Three Thousand (3000) dollars, the excess shall be equally divided between M. Knoedler and W. T. Richards." A year later, Knoedler wrote to Richards: "I was going to suggest to you to delay at least the execution of the large picture and am therefore very glad that you are willing to cancel our contract."

23 Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 299. Richards apparently proposed a series of articles to *Scribner's* and *Harper's*, which were never completed.

24 WTR to George Whitney, May 5, 1879, London. Quoted in Ferber, 220.

25 WTR to George Whitney, Mar. 13, 1879, London. Quoted in Ferber, 220.

26 WTR to George Whitney, Sept. 4, 1879, Wyke Regis. Quoted in Ferber, 318.

27 Morris, *Masterpieces of the Sea*, 42.

28 Ferber, *Pastoral Interlude*, 13.

29 Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 355.

30 Annette Blaugrund, ed., *Paris 1889: American Artists at the Universal Exposition* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 290.

31 [Sarah Butler Wister], "Loitering through the Paris Exposition," *Atlantic Monthly* 65, no. 389 (Mar. 1890): 371.

32 Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 354.

33 Morris, *Masterpieces of the Sea*, 14–15. "One was Frank R. Stockton, the humorist and story-teller who invented 'The Lady or the Tiger'; another was his brother, John D. Stockton, of the New York Herald staff; Judge James T. Mitchell, of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, was a member; and Professor George Stewart, of Haverford College; the Rev. J. Spencer Kennard, and Judge Ashman, of the Philadelphia Orphans' Court, were others."

34 WTR Papers, AAA.

35 Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 25–28.

36 Fidelia Richards, undated letter to Richards's children. WTR Papers, AAA.

37 WTR to James Mitchell, Jan. 17, 1854, Philadelphia. Quoted in Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 28.

38 See Charles Colbert, *Haunted Visions: Spiritualism and American Art* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 2011).

39 John Roche, "Making a Reputation: Mark Twain in Newport," *Mark Twain Journal* 25, no. 2 (Fall 1987): 23–27. Members were: "Alexander Agassiz [son of Louis], Clarence King, Raphael Pumpelly (a geologist at Harvard), Colonel George Waring, John La Farge, William Greenough, Richard Morris Hunt, William Trost Richards, Richard Staigg, Charlotte Cushman, Fanny Fern, Kate Field, Elizabeth Cary Agassiz (founder and president of Radcliffe College [wife of Louis Agassiz]), George Bancroft, William Rogers (president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Charles C. Perkins (president of the Boston Art Museum), Helen Hunt Jackson, Henry James, Sr., Emma Lazarus, and S. Weir Mitchell" (26n3).

40 Fidelia Bridges, who spent the summer of 1861 with William and Anna Richards, explained to their children that it "was a very hard one for your father. In the terrible excitement of the first year of the war there was no demand for art." Undated letter, WTR Papers, AAA.

41 Linda S. Ferber, "John Brown's Grave and Other Civil War Themes in William T. Richards's Adirondack Paintings," *Antiques* 162, no. 1 (July 2002): 72–81.

42 Ferber, 75.

43 Victor E. Gibbens, "Alexander Lawrie, Painter," *Indiana Magazine of History* 40, no. 1 (Mar. 1944): 33–40.

44 Alexander Lawrie, diary entries for July 19, 1863 and Sept. 22, 1863. Quoted in Linda S. Ferber and Caroline M. Welsh, *In Search of a National Landscape: William Trost Richards and the Artists' Adirondacks, 1850–1870* (Blue Mountain Lake: Adirondack Museum, 2002), 84.

45 Jennifer Raab, *Frederic Church: The Art and Science of Detail* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

46 Durand, "Letters on Landscape Painting," 98.

47 WTR quoted in Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 72.

48 Ferber, 369.

49 Dana E. Byrd and Frank H. Goodyear III, *Winslow Homer and the Camera: Photography and the Art of Painting* (Brunswick: Bowdoin College Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

50 J. G. Brown, "Purity of Imagination," *Crayon* 4, no. 6 (June 1857): 170: "Imagination is the camera of the mind. In it we see such forms as are related to our life. Men think they look directly at the landscape, and comprehend it all at a glance. Really they are looking each at a separate reflection of it."

51 J. S., "Naturalism and Genius," *New Path* 1, no. 6 (Oct. 1863): 66: "Direct copying of nature could not be carried further. The great boulder is, as it were, photographed in color, every hue of its wonderfully varied colors, every irregular split and crack and broken surface, every substance inlaid in its mass, like a precious stone in Florentine mosaic, every incrustation is given with faultless, mirror-like accuracy."

52 James Henry [Henry James Sr.], "The Incentives and Aims of Art," *Crayon* 1, no. 4 (Jan. 24, 1855): 50: "A mere mechanical imitation of Nature is altogether inadequate to the purposes of Art. When the musical artist plays accurately and literally, he may show, mechanically, the design of the composer, but when he animates his performances, by infusing into them all the energies of his inner being, and all the ardor of feeling and emotion, he furnishes an interpretation of the master, whose soul lies in the work. In this regard, there exists a strong analogy between the sister Arts of music and painting."

53 F. G. S., "On Finish in Art?," *Crayon* 6, no. 7 (July 1859): 197–203.

54 Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981).

55 "Not only have political institutions undergone a change, but so also have the natural sciences, and all branches of knowledge," in "The Essential Difference between the True and the Popular Art Systems," *New Path* 2, no. 3 (July 1864): 33.

56 Joshua C. Taylor, *The Fine Arts in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 97.

57 William Rossetti, "Art News from England" (letter 16), *Crayon* 3, no. 8 (Aug. 1856): 245.

58 See Linda Nochlin, *Misère: The Visual Representation of Misery in the 19th Century* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2018).

59 Linda S. Ferber and Nancy K. Anderson, eds., *The American Pre-Raphaelites: Radical Realists* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2019).

60 Diane Waggoner, "'The Perfect Observance of Truth': Photography and American Pre-Raphaelitism," in Ferber and Anderson, 95–111.

61 Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 140–44.

62 See George P. Landow, *William Holman Hunt and Typological Symbolism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

63 Quoted in Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 129–30.

64 Linda S. Ferber, "An American Pre-Raphaelite in New York: William Trost Richards," *Archives of American Art Journal* 47, no. 1/2 (2008): 4–15.

65 See Janice Simon, "*The Crayon*, 1855–1861: The Voice of Nature in Criticism, Poetry, and the Fine Arts" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1990).

66 Janice Simon, "Imaging a New Heaven on a New Earth: *The Crayon* and Nineteenth-Century American Periodical Covers," *American Periodicals* 1, no. 1 (Fall 1991): 11–24.

67 Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, 182.

68 William James Stillman, *The Autobiography of a Journalist*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1901).

69 Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 132–33, writes that Farrer was: "An Englishman who had come to New York in 1860 and had been a student and disciple of Ruskin. Among the membership were the critic Clarence Cook (1828–1900), the writer and geologist Clarence King (1842–1901), the architects Peter B. Wight (1838–1925) and Russell Sturgis Jr. (1836–1909), and artists Charles Herbert Moore (1840–1930), John William Hill (1812–1879), his son John Henry Hill (1839–1922), and William T. Richards."

70 Linda S. Ferber and William H. Gerdts, eds., *The New Path: Ruskin and the American Pre-Raphaelites* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1985).

71 "Association for the Advancement of Truth in Art," *New Path* 1, no. 1 (May 1863): 11.

72 Sophie Lynford, "Abolitionism and the American Pre-Raphaelite Experiment," in Ferber and Anderson, *American Pre-Raphaelites*, 39–57.

73 "An Important Gothic Building," *New Path* 2, no. 2 (June 1864): 17–32.

74 Sophie Lynford quotes Linda Dowling's positive insight that the medieval revival, by "invoking history, especially medieval history, thus became for [the] mid-century generation neither an 'aristocratic' flourish nor a 'nostalgic' appeal but a fervent gesture of sympathy and solidarity with humanity"; in Lynford, "Pre-Raphaelite Experiment," 47. As early as 1836, A. W. N. Pugin's *Contrasts: Or, A Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries and Similar Buildings of the Present Day: Shewing the Present Decay of Taste; Accompanied by Appropriate Text* (London: Charles Dolman) ardently argued for the restoration of such values. The association of the medieval revival style with art was reinforced by J. Cleveland Cady's design for the Brooklyn Art Association Building (1868–72), the new Museum of Fine Arts in Boston's Copley Square (1871–78) by Russell Sturgis Jr. and Charles Brigham, and the original Fifth Avenue building for the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1875–80) in New York by Calvert Vaux and J. Wrey Mould. Besides these literal interpretations of High Victorian Gothic, Ruskin's emphasis on nature and symbolic architecture had a lasting impact on American architects such as H. H. Richardson and Frank Lloyd Wright.

75 WTR to George Whitney, Dec. 18, 1878, London. Quoted in Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 322–23. Ferber notes that Richards made at least ten watercolors of this scene, and five oil paintings.

76 Quoted in Ferber, 331. Ferber notes that "they were presented to Vassar College by Magoon as the 'Cycle of Universal Culture Illustrated by the Graphic History of English Art.'"

77 WTR to George Whitney, Oct. 29, 1878, London. Quoted in Ferber, 332–33.

78 David Schuyler, "The Tourists' River: Experiencing the Hudson Valley," in *Sanctified Landscape: Writers, Artists, and the Hudson River Valley, 1820–1909* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 8–27.

79 Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery," *American Monthly Magazine*, n.s., 1 (Jan. 1836): 1–12; reprinted in *American Art, 1700–1960: Sources and Documents*, ed. John McCoubrey (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 101: "There are those who

through ignorance or prejudice strive to maintain that American scenery possesses little that is interesting or truly beautiful—that it is rude without picturesqueness, and monotonous without sublimity—that being destitute of those vestiges of antiquity, whose associations so strongly affect the mind, it may not be compared with European scenery." One example of this negative attitude is found in George William Curtis's *Lotus-Eating: A Summer Book*, illustrated by John Kensett (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1854), 204–5. Curtis, a one-time resident of the transcendentalist commune at Brook Farm in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, disdained American scenery as woefully inferior to that of Europe: "The moment you travel in America the victory of Europe is sure. For purposes of practical pleasure we have no mountains of an alpine sublimity, no lakes of the natural and artificial loveliness of the European, although one of ours may be large enough to supply all the European lakes. We have few rivers of any romantic association, no quaint cities, no picturesque costume and customs, no pictures or buildings. We have none of the charms that follow long history."

80 Cole, "Essay on American Scenery," 102: "The most distinctive, and perhaps the most impressive, characteristic of American scenery is its wildness. It is the most distinctive, because in civilized Europe the primitive features of scenery have long since been destroyed or modified."

81 Kevin J. Avery and Claire A. Conway, "The Reverend E. L. Magoon and the American Drawings Collection," *Antiques* 157, no. 1 (Jan. 2000): 212–17, 214.

82 Albert Boime, *The Magisterial Gaze: Manifest Destiny and American Landscape Painting, c. 1830–1865* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).

83 Alan Wallach, "Some Further Thoughts on the Panoramic Mode in Hudson River School Landscape Paintings," in *Within the Landscape: Essays on Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture*, ed. Phillip Earenfight and Nancy Siegel (Carlisle: Trout Gallery, Dickinson College; University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 113.

84 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (1836) (Boston: James Munroe, 1849), 8.

85 John Ruskin, *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1851) (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1891), 84–85.

86 Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 277–78.

87 See Linda S. Ferber, *Tokens of a Friendship: Miniature Watercolors by William T. Richards* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982). Also, Anna O. Marley, Linda S. Ferber, and David R. Brigham, *A Mine of Beauty: Landscapes by William Trost Richards* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 2012).

88 Clare A. Conway, "The 'William Trost Richards Gallery' in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, c. 1870–1929: Its Development, Display, and Disposal" (master's thesis, Hunter College, City University of New York, 2000). All but ten of Magoon's original donations were sold in 1929. Also, Avery and Conway, "Reverend E. L. Magoon." See Linda S. Ferber, "The Power of Patronage: William Trost Richards and the American Watercolor Movement," in *Masters of Color and Light: Homer, Sargent, and the American Watercolor Movement*, Linda S. Ferber and Barbara Dayer Gallati (Washington, DC: Brooklyn Museum of Art in association with Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), 69–91.

89 W. H. Willcox, paraphrased in Morris, *Masterpieces of the Sea*, 37–38.

90 WTR to George Whitney, Oct. 11, 1877, Newport. Quoted in Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 286.

91 The group is called the Watercolour World, and their online archive debuted Jan. 31, 2019; see https://www.watercolourworld.org/.

92 Cole, "Essay on American Scenery," 107.

93 Linda S. Ferber, "A Philadelphia Legacy: William T. Richards and George Whitney," in Marley, Ferber, and Brigham, *Mine of Beauty*, 24–25.

94 William Cullen Bryant, *A Forest Hymn* (1824) (New York: Townsend, 1860), 4.

95 WTR to Eleanor Price, Feb. 3, 1883, Germantown, 27. WTR Papers, AAA.

96 WTR to George Whitney, Feb. 4, 1867, Darmstadt. WTR Papers, AAA.

97 N. P. C., F., and Snodgrass, "Sketchings: Relation between Landscape Painting and Geology," *Crayon* 6, no. 8 (Aug. 1859): 255–60.

98 WTR quoted in Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 107. Celebrated in his day, Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz (1807–73) is controversial today as a committed creationist who espoused racist theories, including polygenesis, the theory that black and white people descended from different origins. See Stephen Jay Gould, "Flaws in a Victorian Veil," chap. 16 in *The Panda's Thumb* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1980).

99 Edward Hitchcock, *Elementary Geology* (New York: Dayton and Newman, 1842), 279; quoted in Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825–1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 51.

100 Rebecca Bedell, *The Anatomy of Nature: Geology and American Landscape Painting, 1825–1875* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). Also, Karl Kusserow and Alan C. Braddock, eds., *Nature's Nation: American Art and Environment* (Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum and Yale University Press, 2018).

HOW THE SEA KILLS THE TREES: WILLIAM TROST RICHARDS AND NEW NARRATIVES FOR MARINE PAINTING

Linda S. Ferber

INTRODUCTION

William Trost Richards's landscape and marine subjects, painted between 1854 and 1905, belong to the larger nineteenth-century discourse on nature. Such images were flexible devices that accommodated many of the ideas and beliefs that engaged the artist and his patrons, as well as the wide audience for visual culture in the second half of the century. Land- and seascapes served as vehicles for expressions of national identity, and as reflections of widespread interest in science, especially geology and paleontology. As the confident worldview of the early nineteenth century waned, landscape and marine paintings also served as metaphors for private and collective anxieties. In these several contexts, we consider a series of unusual works by Richards lodged somewhere between landscape and marine painting: coastal landscapes in which trees grow on sandy beaches at the ocean's edge (plate 106). The subject preoccupied Richards (fig. 1) between 1870 and 1877 during a period of tension and transition for the artist just at mid-career.[1]

1. William Trost Richards, carte de visite photograph, c. 1861. Photograph album (Philadelphia: Wm. S. and A. Martien), Smithsonian Library, Washington, DC.

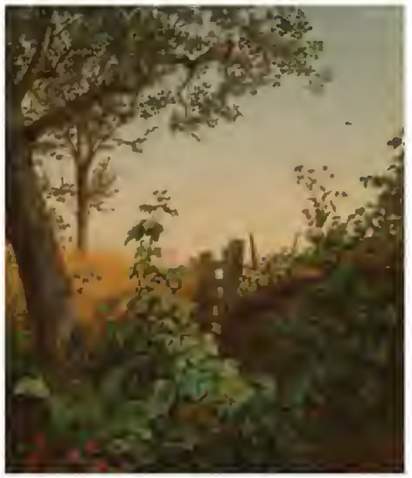
THE RACE FOR FAME

What were the tensions inherent in forging an identity as an American landscape painter? Richards entered what he called the "race" for fame in 1854. His idol, Thomas Cole (1801–48) was gone but American landscape painting was dominated by Cole's "national" landscape type based upon sites in New York State and New England. This vision was embraced by two generations, including Richards's self-proclaimed models—Frederic Edwin Church (1826–1900), John Frederick Kensett (1816–72), and Jasper Cropsey (1823–1900)—all based in New York City. Working under their influence in Philadelphia, Richards had mastered this mainstream type by 1857, as demonstrated in a series of brilliant Adirondack landscapes executed for local patrons. *In the Adirondack Mountains* of 1857 is a paradigm of national landscape narrative (fig. 2). The eagle and rainbow are emblems of nationhood and divine sanction. The point of view is elevated, panoramic, and commanding. The precise detail is informed by the artist's awareness of geology as well as geological process visualized in the waterfall and in the eroded

2. William Trost Richards, *In the Adirondack Mountains*, 1857. Oil on canvas, 30.5 x 39.4 in., Saint Louis Art Museum, 54:1933.

and fissured face of the mountains. Richards's early interest is documented in a letter of 1854 to a friend studying at Harvard: "I almost envy your geological Surveys with Prof. Agassiz," Richards wrote from Philadelphia, "I have long been wishing to study in an Elementary Manner Geology. Can you tell me of any thoroughly good book; I must make it part of my discipline for the winter."[2] The painting belonged to Professor Joseph Leidy (1823–91), an eminent paleontologist at the University of Pennsylvania whose patronage suggests that Richards's image had visual and intellectual appeal in scientific as well as artistic circles.

This moment of equilibrium between image, narrative, and reception would be short-lived for Richards. Mounting sectional tensions during the 1850s undermined the collective assumptions of political and cultural unity implied by such Northern landscape subjects. Richards's own politics may be inferred by his marriage in 1856 to a Quaker, Anna Matlack (1834–1900), as well as his connections to the Philadelphia abolitionist circles of Unitarian Reverend William Henry Furness (1802–96). Richards's choices of



3. William Trost Richards, *A Neglected Corner of the Wheatfield*, 1865. Oil on canvas, 17 x 14 in., private collection.

landscape subjects after 1857 reflected these tensions in his search for alternative landscape types presenting new narratives and other models. The geological preoccupations of *In the Adirondack Mountains* also reflected the artist's knowledge of John Ruskin's *Modern Painters*. Barely a year after the Adirondack series, Richards retreated from the panoramic program to embrace Ruskin's regimen of "truth to nature," revealed in the hyper-detail of his early "all-foreground" Ruskinian landscapes (plates 25–26).[3] By 1863, Richards was formally affiliated with the American Pre-Raphaelites and during the Civil War, a number of his works conveyed veiled political messages.[4] Comparisons of *A Neglected Corner of the Wheatfield* of 1865 (fig. 3) with *In the Adirondack Mountains* are significant. From the latter's elevated eagle's eye view, we descend for a literal worm's eye view. *A Neglected Corner* is one of several botanical parables commenting upon the national crisis of social order embedded in the image of an invasion of cultivated crops by weeds; the rankly luxuriant growth that has clambered over the wall and through the gate.[5] During the 1860s and into the 1870s, Richards accommodated both personal and patron ambivalence with the concurrent practice of dual landscape types. He alternated the expansive panorama of the national landscape with the claustrophobic micro-detail of the American Pre-Raphaelites. Richards was probably the best known of the artist members.[6] His paintings were admired, but almost always with reservations. While critic Henry T. Tuckerman might "enjoy" Richards's Pre-Raphaelite landscapes as "miracles of special study," he nevertheless questioned "the principles upon which they are executed."[7]

FROM THE WOODS TO THE SEASHORE

4. William Trost Richards, *Sankaty Light, Nantucket*, 1865. Oil on canvas, 9 x 16 in., private collection.

The tensions imposed by his stylistic schizophrenia from painting to painting (and even within the same painting) as well as critics' persistent charges of Pre–Raphaelite extremism in his landscapes encouraged Richards to experiment with marine motifs and coastal scenery. By the early 1860s, he was traveling and sketching on the Northeastern

5. William Trost Richards, *Beach at Long Branch: Sunrise*, 1872. Oil on canvas, 23 x 42 in., Detroit Institute of Arts, 2009.1.

coast beginning with summer forays to the New Jersey shore. During these years he also explored the New England coast as far north as Mount Desert Island and included excursions offshore to Nantucket. There in July and August 1865, he painted a series of small plein air oil studies that were admired: "Some of these sketches," reported the *Round Table*, "appear to promise something greater than he has yet produced"[8] (fig. 4). The taut horizontals and low horizon of *Nantucket Shore* already seem to fulfill that promise with a nearly modernist composition (plate 24). The following summer Richards visited Mount Desert Island where he made studies that yielded several impressive exhibition pictures. The looming mass of *The Otter Cliffs*, 1866, captured in all its Ruskinian geological complexity, demonstrates Richards's complete mastery of the coastal sublime years before his

6. Winslow Homer, *Long Branch, New Jersey*, 1869. Oil on canvas, 16 x 21.8 in., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 41.631.

visits to the southern coast of England[9] (plate 173).

From 1874 on, the artist and his growing family would summer regularly at Newport, and Rhode Island's varied coasts figured prominently in his oils and watercolors (plates 121–33). These sites, along with subjects from forays along the New Jersey coast from Atlantic City to Long Branch, became career-long signature subjects for the artist (figs. 5, 12, plates 106, 177). Richards was not alone in his growing interest in the coast and the sea. A survey of exhibition records indicates a surge in the number of such subjects during the 1860s. Established Hudson River School landscape painters like Kensett (fig. 13) and Sanford Robinson Gifford (1823–80) developed the coast as a side specialty. Richards's fellow Philadelphians William Stanley Haseltine (1835–1900) and James Hamilton (1819–78), the "American Turner," devoted most of their efforts to the genre. In 1869, Winslow Homer (1836–1910) painted one of his first coastal subjects in oil portraying a seaside promenade at *Long Branch, New Jersey* (fig. 6).

THE "MOST UNINVITING LANDSCAPE ON EARTH": THE ANTI-PICTURESQUE

The particular seaside genre investigated here in Richards's work lies outside of conventions of traditional marine and coastal painting. These works are not ship portraits, shipwrecks, nor maritime records of seaport activity. Nor do these images belong, like Homer's *Long Branch*, to the modern life subject of seaside resorts, although the vicinity

7. William Trost Richards, *Lone Trees, Coast of New Jersey*, 1870. Oil on canvas, 17.8 x 30.3 in., private collection, courtesy Menconi + Schoelkopf, New York.

was then in the early stages of such development. These particular motifs were drawn from the then-largely uninhabited remoter stretches of New Jersey's northern coast. *Lone Trees, Coast of New Jersey* of 1870 (fig. 7) is the first major work on this theme and *At Atlantic City*, 1877 is among the latest (plate 106).[10] These littoral zones comprised of sand beaches lapped by Atlantic waves were perceived as deserts and wastelands outside the well-developed cult of scenery associated with images of the continent's interior, cast as regions of pastoral cultivation or sublime wilderness. When noted in literature, ocean beaches comprised a form of anti-picturesque scenery whose lack of visual appeal was characterized by Thoreau, for example, in his walks on Cape Cod as the "most uninviting landscape on earth."[11] What, then, was the lure of this "uninviting landscape" for Richards and his generation?

Richards's seaside forests were unusual even within this coastal genre because they married images that belonged to distinctly different conventions. Mature trees common to the vocabulary of *land*-scape painting appear in a *sea*-scape setting as landscape aliens in a hostile environment. They are growing on a sandy beach where the lower trunks are bathed at high tides by the salt water of ocean waves washing away the sand to reveal, undermine, and ultimately destroy the roots. While the motif of trees struggling for survival at the coast was not Richards's invention, these New Jersey forests became a signature subject for him from 1870 to 1877. I suggest that these melancholy images offer clues to Richards's state of mind during a difficult period of transition from a landscape to a marine painter. This reading is reinforced by a number of his titles. Most are in the realm of the topographical: *Light House Point* or *Near Atlantic City* (figs. 8–9). Some, however,

8. William Trost Richards, *Light House Point, Atlantic City, New Jersey*, 1871. Watercolor on paper, 8.5 x 13.9 in., private collection (formerly Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of the Reverend E. L. Magoon, DD, 80.1.32).

9. William Trost Richards, *Near Atlantic City (Coast of New Jersey, U. S.)*, 1874. Oil on canvas, 19.8 x 38.5 in., private collection.

invoke themes of isolation; for example: *Lone Trees, Coast of New Jersey* (fig. 7). The most provocative title is *How the Sea Kills the Trees*, assigned to a large watercolor of 1875, now unlocated. Richards was fascinated by the relentless forces operating at the edge of the continent, commenting on another work in this series: "The sea, in its inroads on the beaches of New Jersey, has destroyed the woods of cedar and holly, which formerly grew to high-water mark in the vicinity of Atlantic City."[12] The extent of the series and the notice these works attracted suggest that the public also responded to these somber images. Art critics described these paintings of drowning forests as "quietly impressive" yet also as "barren" evoking "desolation."[13] Richards's most important patrons acquired these subjects; they were exhibited at major venues in the United States and abroad. *Lone Trees, Coast of New Jersey*, 1870 was shown at the Royal Academy in 1871 (no. 505), and *At Atlantic City*, 1873 (fig. 11) was exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1873.[14] In a broader cultural and social context, these drowning forests might be read as powerful metaphors for the private anxieties and philosophical uncertainties of the post-Civil War culture in which Richards and his audience functioned.[15]

The Atlantic City series also offers a unique opportunity to study the particular pressures on a landscape specialist in the 1870s as American tastes underwent profound changes. The great reputations of mid-century artists—Richards's own models—were on the wane; Cole was long dead; Church would virtually cease painting by 1880; Kensett died in 1872 and Gifford in 1880. By then, Richards and his generation faced the collapse of the market for the American landscape school, by then known (without affection) as the Hudson River School, in the face of growing critical and collector preference for contemporary European painters and American painters with European training.[16] Richards felt the turn of domestic tastes keenly, lamenting in a letter of 1879 to his primary patron George Whitney, a Philadelphia manufacturer of railroad car wheels: "Be thankful that you are not a painter," and confiding his fear that "the Time is past when the American people can hunger for my pictures."[17] By 1870, Richards and others were already turning from landscape to marine themes. Coastal subjects in both the oil and watercolor mediums offered the picture-buying public an alternative. Richards's focus upon the seaside forests at Atlantic City was both fortuitous and premeditated; signaling his transition (and his conflict) by combining key elements of each genre in a novel and somber narrative that struck a resonant chord of melancholy within his audience. These paintings and watercolors also conferred scenic status upon a hitherto unrecognized stretch of coast.

BUILDING A RAILROAD TO NOWHERE: THE INVENTION OF ATLANTIC CITY

Richards was among the earliest artists to visit Atlantic City; probably in 1859 and certainly in 1860. The recent origin of Atlantic City was the story of a capital venture in which Philadelphia investors had acquired the right of way in 1852 for the Camden and Atlantic Railroad, completed in 1854. The same group purchased hundreds of acres of oceanfront property on Absecon Island, an isolated location some sixty-two miles from Philadelphia. This virtually uninhabited beach was the railroad terminus and site planned for a summer retreat convenient to Philadelphia. The speculative nature of the scheme was dubbed "building a railroad to nowhere." By 1868, the summer population of the seaside resort was reported to be close to 40,000 (fig. 10).[18] The development of tourist industries on the Atlantic seaboard undoubtedly played a role in the new popularity of coastal scenery. Exhibition listings offered a roll call of summer retreats for urban populations of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia including Newport, Cape Ann, Narragansett, Long Branch, and Atlantic City. The rise of coastal tourism, especially in New England as the industries of fishing, whaling, and shipbuilding waned, has been well studied. Old settlements like Nantucket and Newport were redefined. Their seaside locales were promoted as therapeutic retreats—physical and spiritual—for urban dwellers. Equally attractive was the allure of an undifferentiated quaint eighteenth-century past conferred upon these communities by the ascendant colonial revival. Dona Brown has aptly defined the period of 1875 to 1900 as one of "nostalgic touring."[19] Richards's choice of Newport as a summer residence was astute. Aquidneck Island was, in his words, "a mine of beauty entirely unworked."[20] Picturesque scenery resonant with historic associations abounded, as well as a wealthy population of socially and intellectually prominent potential patrons.

A NEW ATLANTIS

In contrast, Atlantic City had been recently developed on an unpicturesque terrain unhallowed by a colonial past. The destination's attractions and associations had to be invented from whole cloth; an enterprise in which guidebooks and travel literature, as well as Richards's oil paintings and watercolors such as *Light House Point*, 1871 and *Near Atlantic City*, 1874, all played a role (figs. 8–9). The nature of scenic experience along touring itineraries required topographical contrast; a legacy of the eighteenth-century

10. "Atlantic City from the Lighthouse," engraving from Penn, "A New Atlantis," 609.

11. William Trost Richards, *At Atlantic City*, 1873 (unlocated), engraving from Sheldon, *American Painters*, 62.

12. William Trost Richards, *"Sand Hills," Atlantic City, N.J.*, 1876. Watercolor on paper, 22 x 36 in., unlocated.

picturesque tour which, by Richards's day, was also deeply informed by popular interest of modern tourists in geology and paleontology. An excursion to a coastal zone also required terrestrial features to function as both physical and psychological footholds before the existential threat posed by ocean waves controlled by tides and weather; natural forces beyond human regulation.

Guidebooks and articles hailed the ten-mile-long expanse of Absecon and Brigantine beaches; the salt meadows; the panoramic views to be obtained from the Absecon lighthouse. Richards recorded many of these sites in the early 1870s, as well as the pine and cedar forests also extolled in the literature: "the endless woods of pine, sand planted, strew over that boundless beach a murmur like the sea"[21] (figs. 11–12). Their poetry, however, was a poignant one for visitors were also informed that these "endless woods" were doomed to destruction by the coastal erosion that was threatening by 1868 to topple the lighthouse as well. Such notions played to the darker side of the coastal landscape never far below the surface in this border zone. By 1873, Richards was identified with Atlantic City forests in the way that Kensett had been associated since the 1850s with the New England coast (fig. 13). "Two of our best marine painters in their works offer us a choice of coast-landscape," wrote A. G. Penn in *Lippincott's Magazine*: "Kensett paints the bare still crags,...standing out of his foregrounds...keen, fresh, beautiful and severe; it would take a pair of stout New England lungs to breathe enjoyably in such an air. That is the

13. John Kensett, *Beacon Rock, Newport, RI*, 1857. Oil on canvas, 22.5 x 36 in., National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 1953.11.

northern coast. Mr. William Richards gives us the southern—the landscape, in fact, of Atlantic City. In his scenes we have the infinitude of soft silver beach, the rolling tumultuousness of a boundless sea and twisted cedars mounted like toiling ships on the crests of undulating sand-hills."[22]

The opposition proposed here between Kensett's vision of a terrain that requires "stout New England lungs" and the "soft southern beaches" of Richards suggests the operation of a coastal hierarchy of region and gender: "stout" versus "soft" and "New England" versus "southern" that calls for further study. These contrasts would still have been loaded terms in 1873, less than a decade after the Civil War. This increase in production of coastal and marine paintings by Richards and others was met by interest among patrons and dealers just at the moment when the appetite for American landscape paintings was ebbing. These motifs were a form of packaging novel experience by developing a repertoire of images reinforced by descriptive texts. Richards's Atlantic City paintings and watercolors, like Kensett's paintings of the New England coast, organized audience responses to these sites. Their paintings commemorated whole sets of associations and memories for those who frequented these sites and, perhaps more importantly, established the coast as an attractive destination. In this way, the rise of nostalgic tourism, as well as the value of seaside real estate, served to reinforce the lure of the "uninviting landscape."

14. Carleton Watkins, photograph of Louis Agassiz lecturing at the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1861. From Bedell, *Anatomy of Nature*, 114.

OTHER NARRATIVES: THE OCEAN FLOOR

What other general associations did the audience bring to these sites? What other narratives might coastal and marine subjects have carried for an audience of the 1860s and 1870s? The development of an elaborate iconography of continental landscape imagery to accommodate and naturalize the expansive impulses of the day has been well studied. We have seen a prime example of the mode in Richards's *In the Adirondack Mountains* of 1857 (fig. 2). Less investigated has been American attention focused on the sea. Exploration of the ocean floor was underway in surveys conducted in the 1850s and 1860s for the laying of telegraph cables as well as for the purpose of scientific investigation. American oceanographer Matthew F. Maury's (1806–73) pioneering work, *The Physical Geography*

15. Christian Schussele, *Ocean Life*, c. 1859. Watercolor, gouache, graphite, and gum arabic on off-white wove paper, 19 x 27.4 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1977.181.

16. Edward Moran, *The Valley in the Sea*, 1862. Oil on canvas, 40.5 x 64 in., Indianapolis Museum of Art, Newfields, 70.5.

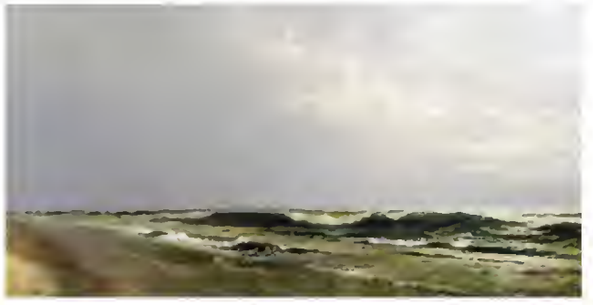
of the Sea, was published in 1855. Between 1854 and 1860, financier Cyrus West Field (1819–92), who had accompanied Frederic Church to South America in 1853, promoted the enterprise to lay the first submarine telegraph cable between America and Europe.[23]

These explorations drew public attention to the ocean floor as well as to its edges. The scientific study of deep sea soundings and dredges had profound implications, reversing earlier perceptions of the ocean floor as incapable of supporting any lifeform at such depths. The long-held theory of the so-called azoic zone, below four hundred fathoms, had proposed a frigid waste of utter darkness. In the wake of new discoveries, however, the abyss was transformed in the popular imagination from an inhospitable environment to the very cradle of life; a timeless zone thought to be inhabited by living fossils. This scientifically erroneous but powerful idea suggested that the key to the Earth's past and to the process of evolution lay in a deep and changeless ocean floor.[24] The shallower littoral zones—the same beaches and coasts frequented by tourists and artists—were also active sites for the practice of marine science, paleontology, and geological investigation. The famous Harvard geologist and zoologist, Louis Agassiz (1807–73), conducted well-publicized coastal surveys along the Atlantic coast (fig. 14).[25]

Fascination with the marine environment and marine life was manifested in popular culture by the aquarium craze of the 1850s and surely played a role in stimulating landscape painters to experiment with coastal subjects. A few paintings of actual underwater images merged the realms of scientific illustration and high art. Christian Schussele's (1824–79) watercolor, *Ocean Life*, c. 1859 and Edward Moran's (1820–1901) *The Valley in the Sea*, 1862 are fascinating examples of this unusual genre (figs. 15–16). Dr. James M. Sommerville (1825–99), a physician and amateur naturalist, collaborated with Schussele who portrayed the teeming medley of marine flora and fauna as instructed by his partner who included the image as a chromolithograph in his 1859 publication, *Ocean Life*.[26] These marine images are of particular interest because they were produced in Philadelphia by artists who were part of Richards's professional and social circles. Schussele's visual catalogue of marine forms, compressed, condensed, and foregrounded in a shallow space, calls to mind the highly detailed close studies of botanical and horticultural subjects that Richards was painting in Philadelphia at that moment. Some of these were conceived in an arched format mimicking the bell jar used in fern cases and evoking the popular Wardian cases as well (plates 25–26).[27] Richards also knew the Moran brothers well; he and Edward had studied with Paul Weber (1823–1916) in the 1850s. Moran's *Valley in the Sea*, probably unique among nineteenth-century American paintings, was loaned by Sommerville to the 1862 Pennsylvania Academy annual where it was singled out as "perhaps the most original painting of the exhibition."[28]

TIDES OF THOUGHT

Thus, to meditate upon the ocean around 1860 was to entertain a number of powerful ideas; associations that were both progressive and retrospective. It was to celebrate technological and scientific progress while speculating upon the dawn of time and the larger challenge to faith posed by recent discoveries in natural history, paleontology, and geology. Research in these disciplines theorized a complex origin for the Earth far beyond that offered by Genesis. These ideas proposed a pre-human Earth history of unimaginable length; a paradigm shift now known as deep time or geological time.[29] The vast scale of geological time was visible in the rock strata dramatically exposed in glaciated



17. William Trost Richards, *Atlantic Coast*, 1870. Oil on canvas, 22.8 x 44 in., private collection.

18. Alfred T. Bricher, *Time and Tide*, c. 1873. Oil on canvas, 25.1 x 50 in., Dallas Museum of Art, 1976.40.FA.

mountainsides and eroded sea cliffs (plates 161–69, 173).[30] While formative glaciers were long gone from the mountains and coasts of the Northeast, the daily ebb and flow of ocean tides were a profound manifestation of time and mutability; a reminder of physical forces operating for millions of years to form, destroy, and refashion the face of the Earth. In their earlier marine paintings, both Richards and Alfred T. Bricher (1837–1908) presented tidal motion in precise detail as rows of long leathery waves creeping up on the shining sands in vaguely threatening serpentine undulations. Richards even conjured the malignant "hiss of the swift breaker" audible above the roar of a storm-driven surf.[31] Richards's *Atlantic Coast*, 1870 (fig. 17), was described as "an achievement in art which is a real glory to America. It reaches an accuracy and perfection which painters of no other country have dreamed of; it applies to the difficult, moving model—the billow—all the scrupulous and photographic finish....It must be seen to be appreciated, for...the impression of its implacable truthfulness."[32] Evocative titles like Bricher's *Time and Tide* (fig. 18) drew on a line from Sir Walter Scott's *The Antiquary* (1816): "Time and tide tarry for no man," marrying our belief that the passing of time and the recurrence of tides are profound evidence of eternal processes beyond human control.[33]

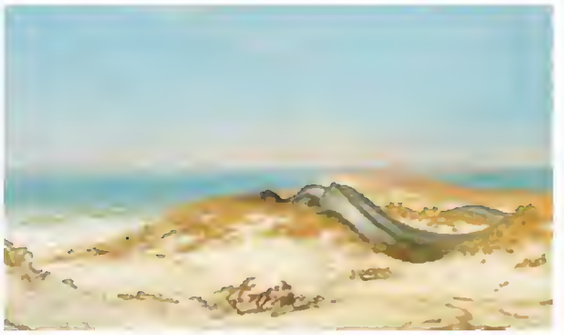
Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, published in 1859, introduced the theory of natural selection to explain past and present forms of life, proposing another unsettling mechanism at work. Long-held assumptions of permanence were challenged by the idea of

19. Edouard Riou, "Ideal Scene of the Lias Period with Ichthyosaurus and Plesiosaurus," in Figuier, *The World before the Deluge*, 231.

inevitable change. Popular scientific narratives like Guillaume Louis Figuier's (1819–94) *The World before the Deluge*, first published in Paris in 1863, presented the geological periods and the life forms they supported as an illustrated guidebook through time.[34] Engravings prepared for Figuier's book by Edouard Riou (1833–1900), appropriated traditional marine and coastal images to provide convincing visualizations of the earliest epochs of Earth history (fig. 19). These images were widely circulated and Figuier's text was translated into English. Sand beaches and rocky shores provided the imagined environments for grotesque and exotic creatures. The ocean and its borders were reinvented as the early world, an association rapidly assimilated into popular culture. The shore became a highly potent imaginative site where past and present seemed to meet and merge. A. G. Penn demonstrates the ease with which the contemporary imagination freely associated about deep time at the ocean's edge. Evoking the mythic drowned island civilization of antiquity, Penn proclaimed Atlantic City as the "New Atlantis." He wrote: "To walk upon [the sand] is in a sense to walk upon the bottom of the ocean. Here are strange marls, the relics of infinite animal life, into which has sunk the [gigantic] lizard...of antiquity...who cranes his snaky throat at us in the museum, swelling with the tale of immemorial times when he weltered here in the sunny ooze."[35]

These collective fantasies conferred prehistories and new meanings upon coastal topography. In this context, Elihu Vedder's (1836–1923) well known painting of 1864, *The Lair of the Sea Serpent*, is not simply a Romantic fantasy but a marvelous window opened into deep time (fig. 20). If Richards's "southern" sand beaches of Atlantic City were associated with "snaky lizards," and "sunny ooze," Penn could also imagine that the "bare stiff crags whitened with salt" of Kensett's New England coast stood out "like the clean and hungry teeth of a wild animal." We enter a coastal twilight zone; an undifferentiated geological past where "hungry teeth" and "gigantic lizards" suggest a far earlier world of Darwinian struggle among predatory creatures; a competition still manifest in the eternal contest between land and sea and evoked by the "snaky" wave patterns of Richards and Bricher. Penn observes further that Atlantic City's beaches are still a zone of primal struggle where "twisted cedars mounted like toiling ships on the crests of undulating sand-hills"[36] maintain a precarious mooring on waves of sand whose crests will inevitably give way before the real thing.

Richards and his audience interpreted these images within a richly layered matrix of associations. Biblical rhetoric merges with Darwin and deep time in the artist's own



20. Elihu Vedder, *The Lair of the Sea Serpent*, 1864. Oil on canvas, 21.5 x 36.6 in., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 84.283.

commentary about a large watercolor of 1876 painted for George Whitney and shown at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition (fig. 12): "It seems 'a waste land,'" the artist paraphrases Tennyson, "where no comes or hath come since the making of the world."[37] A pendant Rhode Island subject, titled *Paradise, Newport*; now unlocated but portraying a verdant landscape, sets up the opposing vision to Richards's New Jersey "waste land," evoking coastal touring as a modern *Pilgrim's Progress* (plate 122).[38]

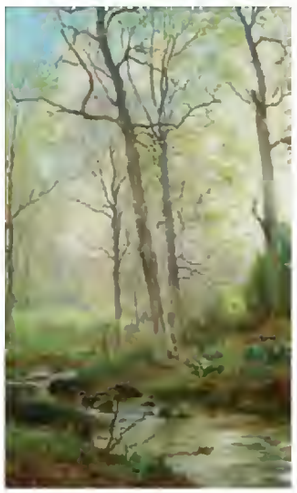
THE DREARY LANDSCAPE

Other voices suggest that these images struck a similar chord on both sides of the Atlantic. London *Times* critic Tom Taylor (1817–80) admired Richards's 1872 Royal Academy submission: "A new name," he wrote, "is attached to one of the most quietly impressive pictures here, 'The Lone Trees, Coast of New Jersey.' Where the thin line of foam runs up on the wind-winnowed sand rises a clump of ragged alders and firs—with an effect of desolation and dreariness that cannot be conveyed in words"[39] (fig. 7). Taylor recognized the painting as something novel; the so-called dreary landscape evolving in Victorian England during the 1870s and 1880s as a vehicle for the later nineteenth-century mood expressing cultural ambivalence in response to social tension.[40] Success in London must have encouraged Richards to submit *At Atlantic City* to the 1873 Paris Salon.

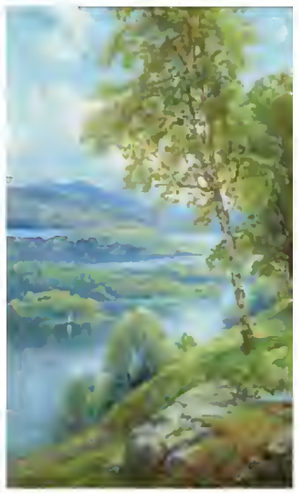
The painting was also engraved for George W. Sheldon's *American Painters*, an important survey of contemporary painting in the United States published in 1879 (fig. 11). "It is a subject too barren to attract many artists very strongly," Sheldon conceded, "but Mr. Richards's treatment of it has made it positively picturesque."[41] Sheldon also affirmed Richards's status by selecting him as one of the fifty artists included in his published canon.

EPILOGUE: INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

When *American Painters* was published, Richards was already a year into his first English sojourn (1878–80) seeking the Sublime in Cornwall and Dorset along Britain's celebrated southern coast. His portrayals of Tintagel and Land's End would be staples of his later career. American (and British) audiences appreciated these works as well as his interpretations of the Rhode Island coast and New Jersey's (treeless) broad beaches. Only at the end of his career would the artist return to the motif of Atlantic City's seaside forests as one player in a quartet of small landscape paintings executed for his old friend and longtime dealer Samuel P. Avery (1822–1904).[42] These paintings evoke the seasons, perhaps the oldest of landscape narratives. The times of the year are portrayed in different regions long familiar to both men; enlisted here to commemorate the four ages of man. *Spring* is a Pennsylvania landscape, perhaps Germantown or Chester County (fig. 21). *Summer* evokes New Hampshire or the Catskills (fig. 22). A view off Aquidneck Island is *Autumn* (fig. 23). The drowning forests of Atlantic City are cast as *Winter* (fig. 24). With all caveats about neat endings, this late sequence must be read as a mutually self-conscious recapitulation of two lifetimes of work and friendship over fifty years creating and placing American paintings. Each site and each season carried its own freight of private and collective memory, closing with an image intended to be emblematic of both men's mortality and the fin de siècle as the sea drowns the trees at the edge of terra firma and the end of their world.



21. William Trost Richards, *Spring*, 1900. Oil on panel, 18 x 13 in., private collection.



22. William Trost Richards, *Summer*, 1900. Oil on panel, 18 x 13 in., private collection.

23. William Trost Richards, *Autumn*, 1900. Oil on panel, 18 x 13 in., private collection.

24. William Trost Richards, *Winter*, 1900. Oil on panel, 18 x 13 in., private collection.

This essay is dedicated to my mother, Irma Ruth Rappaport, in honor of her 105th birthday.

1 The topic of this essay was first presented at the Organization of American Historians 89th Annual Meeting, Chicago, "On the Edge: William T. Richards and New Narratives for Marine Painting," in a session organized by Elizabeth Johns titled *Art as History*, March 1996.

2 WTR to James T. Mitchell, Apr. 27, 1854 (roll 2296), William Trost Richards Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC (hereafter WTR Papers, AAA, searchable online at https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/william-trost-richards-papers-5663).

3 For *In the Adirondack Mountains*, 1857 see Linda S. Ferber, *William Trost Richards: American Landscape and Marine Painter, 1833–1905* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1973), 22–24, 55–56. Linda S. Ferber, *William Trost Richards (1833–1905): American Landscape and Marine Painter* (New York: Garland, 1980), 107–8. Linda S. Ferber, "In Search of a National Landscape: William Trost Richards in the Adirondacks," in *In Search of a National Landscape: William Trost Richards and the Artists' Adirondacks, 1850–1870*, Linda S. Ferber and Caroline M. Welsh (Blue Mountain Lake: Adirondack Museum, 2002), 20–21.

4 Linda S. Ferber, "John Brown's Grave and Other Civil War Themes in William T. Richards's Adirondack Paintings," *Antiques* 162, no. 1 (July 2002): 72–81.

5 For *A Neglected Corner of the Wheatfield* see Ferber, "In Search of a National Landscape," 24.

6 For Richards as an American Pre-Raphaelite see Ferber, *William Trost Richards* (1973), 24–28. Ferber, *William Trost Richards* (1980), 127–77. Linda S. Ferber and William H. Gerdts, eds., *The New Path: Ruskin and the American Pre-Raphaelites* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1985), 214–28. Ferber, "In Search of a National Landscape," 22–26. Linda S. Ferber, "An American Pre-Raphaelite in New York: William Trost Richards," *Archives of American Art Journal* 47, no. 1/2 (2008): 4–15. Carol M. Osborne, *William Trost Richards: True to Nature; Drawings, Watercolors, and Oil Sketches* (Stanford: Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University, 2010), 31–41, 141–54. Linda S. Ferber, "Modern Painters Abroad:

John Ruskin and the American Pre-Raphaelites," *Antiques* 186, no. 3 (May–June 2019): 70–79. Most recently, see Linda S. Ferber and Nancy K. Anderson, eds., *The American Pre-Raphaelites: Radical Realists* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2019): Linda S. Ferber, "Who Were the American Pre-Raphaelites," 5–7; Sophie Lynford, "Abolitionism and the American Pre-Raphaelite Experiment," 54–55; and Diane Waggoner, "'The Perfect Observation of Truth': Photography and American Pre-Raphaelitism," 108–9; and plates 73–83.

7 Henry T. Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists* (New York: G. P. Putnam and Son, 1867), 524.

8 "Philadelphia Art Notes," *Round Table* 30 (Sept. 30, 1865): 233.

9 Drawings document Richards's visit to Mount Desert Island in July/August 1866. At the December Philadelphia Artists' Fund Society exhibition, the *Daily Evening Bulletin* noted "two scenes on Mt. [*sic*] Desert Island, which reveal new talent in him." ("The Artists' Fund Society," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, Dec. 17, 1866.) For Richards at Mount Desert Island see John Wilmerding, *The Artist's Mount Desert: American Painters on the Maine Coast* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 133–35.

10 Richards interpreted the motif in oil paintings as well as in watercolors of both traditional portfolio size and the large exhibition watercolors he began to produce around 1876.

11 Henry David Thoreau, *Cape Cod* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1894), 224, quoted in Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 202.

12 *The Works of Mr. Wm. T. Richards in the Collection of American and Foreign Paintings, to Be Sold on Account of the Late Mr. George Whitney, of Philadelphia. On Exhibition at the Galleries of the American Art Association* (New York: American Art Association, 1885), no. 114, 10.

13 The Philadelphia *Daily Evening Bulletin* quoted the *New York Evening Post*'s report that Tom Taylor of the *London Times* referred to *Lone Trees, Coast of New Jersey* as both "quietly impressive" and yet evocative of "desolation" ("About Painters," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, June 12, 1871). George W. Sheldon admired the artist's ability to transform the "barren" into the "picturesque" (*American Painters* [New York: D. Appleton, 1879], 65).

14 Whitney's large watercolors, *"Sand Hills," Atlantic City, N.J.* and *Paradise, Newport* were shown at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876.

15 For the post-Civil War culture Richards inhabited, both personally and professionally, see Linda S. Ferber, *Pastoral Interlude: William T. Richards in Chester County* (Chadds Ford: Brandywine River Museum, 2001), 39–49, 59–72.

16 For the decline of the Hudson River School see Doreen Bolger Burke and Catherine Hoover Voorsanger, "The Hudson River School in Eclipse," in *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School*, ed. John K. Howat (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), 71–90.

17 WTR to George Whitney, Mar. 14, 1879 (roll 2296, frame 629). WTR Papers, AAA.

18 Carnesworthe [pseud.], *Atlantic City: Its Early and Modern History* (Philadelphia: Wm. C. Harris, 1868), 37–40, 48. J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia: 1609–1884*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts, 1884), 712.

19 Brown, *Inventing New England*, 1–13.

20 WTR to George Whitney, Oct. 10, 1875 (roll 2296, frame 0391–93). WTR Papers, AAA. For Richards at Newport, see Linda S. Ferber, "William Trost Richards at Newport," *Newport History* 51 (Winter 1978): 1–15. Edith Ballinger Price, "A Child's Memories of William Trost Richards," *Newport History* 52 (Winter 1979): 1–9. Linda S. Ferber, *Tokens of a Friendship: Miniature Watercolors by William T. Richards* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982). Linda S. Ferber, "A Philadelphia Legacy: William T. Richards and George Whitney," in *A Mine of Beauty: Landscapes by William Trost Richards*, Anna O. Marley, Linda S. Ferber, and David R. Brigham (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 2012), 21–39.

21 A. G. Penn, "A New Atlantis," *Lippincott's Magazine* 11, no. 27 (June 1873): 613.

22 Penn, 612.

23 For Maury and the transatlantic cable see Margaret Deacon, *Scientists and the Sea, 1650–1900: A Study of Marine Science* (New York: Academic Press, 1971), 293–95. Susan Schlee, *The Edge of an Unfamiliar World: A History of Oceanography* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1973), 58–59.

24 For the azoic zone see Deacon, 297–99 and Schlee, 80–95.

25 For Agassiz and the New England coast, see Rebecca Bedell, *The Anatomy of Nature: Geology and American Landscape Painting, 1825–1875* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 114–21.

26 For Schussele and Sommerville see Kevin Avery, ed., *American Drawings and Watercolors in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), 244–45. Mark D. Mitchell, ed., *The Art of American Still Life: Audubon to Warhol* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2015), 164–65. For Edward Moran see Jeffrey R. Brown, "The Valley in the Sea," in *Recent Accessions, 1966–1972: A Bulletin/Catalogue Prepared for the Exhibition, "New Treasures: A Six Year Retrospective"* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1972), 14–15. Paul D. Schweitzer, *Edward Moran (1829–1901): American Marine and Landscape Painter* (Wilmington: Delaware Art Museum, 1979).

27 For the Wardian case, ferneries, plant cases, and the conservatory, see Henry T. Williams, ed., *Window Gardening: Devoted Specially to the Culture of Flowers and Ornamental Plants for In Door Use and Parlor Decoration* (New York: Henry T. Williams, 1878). Mitchell, *Art of American Still Life*, 164–65 and Mark D. Mitchell, "A Knowing Look: The American Pre-Raphaelite Still Life," in *American Pre-Raphaelites*, 85.

28 [Earl Shinn], "With the Academy Pictures," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, Apr. 28, 1862.

29 Martin J. S. Rudwick, *Scenes from Deep Time: Early Pictorial Representations of the Prehistoric World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), vii, 255n1.

30 See essays by Ethan F. Baxter and Rebecca Bedell in this volume for further discussions of Richards and geology.

31 WTR to George Whitney, Sept. 24, 1876, quoted in Ferber, *William Trost Richards* (1980), 368.

32 For *Atlantic Coast* see Earl Shinn [E. S.], "Private Art-Collections of Philadelphia," *Lippincott's Magazine* 10, no. 33 (Nov. 1872) quoted in Linda S. Ferber, "'My Dear Friend': A Letter from Thomas Eakins to William T. Richards," *Archives of American Art Journal* 34, no. 1 (1994): 20.

33 For the literary and scientific associations of Bricher's landmark painting, *Time and Tide*, see Jeffrey Brown, *Alfred Thomas Bricher, 1837–1908* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1973), 19–20, 58.

34 Louis Figuier, *The World before the Deluge*, ed. H. W. Bristow (London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1866). For Figuier, see Rudwick, *Scenes from Deep Time*, 173–218.

35 Penn, "A New Atlantis," 613.

36 Penn, 612.

37 *Works of Mr. Wm. T. Richards...to Be Sold on Account of...George Whitney*, no. 183, 13.

38 John F. Sears discusses the interpretations of certain scenic tourist attractions as "cathedrals" or "sanctums of creation" in *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 243.

39 Tom Taylor in the *London Times* quoted in "About Painters" in the Philadelphia *Daily Evening Bulletin*, June 12, 1871.

40 For the "dreary landscape," see Howard D. Rodee, "The 'Dreary Landscape' as a Background for Scenes of Rural Poverty in Victorian Paintings," *Art Journal* 36, no.

4 (Summer 1977): 307–13. Ferber, *Pastoral Interlude*, 39–49, 59–72. Tim Barringer, *Opulence & Anxiety: Landscape Paintings from the Royal Academy of Arts* (London: Compton Verney in association with the Royal Academy of Arts, 2007).

41 Sheldon, *American Painters*, 65.

42 Richards had painted a suite of the four seasons for George Whitney between 1865 and 1867 (two are known, both in private collections). He returned to the theme in a number of his Chester County landscapes of the 1880s, named for the months. The masterpiece among these is the majestic *February*, 1887, portraying a melancholy winter twilight (Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts). I consider *February* to be one of the artist's two personal memorials to Whitney who had died in March 1885. The other painting, also in the Academy's collection, is the monumental marine, *Old Ocean's Gray and Melancholy Waste*, 1885 (fig. 12, "William Trost Richards and the Hieroglyphs of Nature" in this volume), interpreting the famous line from William Cullen Bryant's elegiac poem "Thanatopsis" of 1817. The collector's sudden death had precipitated a forced sale of the collection in December 1885; an event that was calamitous for Richards's market. Avery, a longtime mutual friend and colleague of both Whitney and Richards, arranged the sale at the American Art Association in New York.

"ALL THE CHARM OF LONELINESS": THE MELANCHOLY ART OF WILLIAM TROST RICHARDS

Rebecca Bedell

William Trost Richards's work is shadowed by melancholy. He was drawn to scenes of desolation and ruin, to the surviving fragments of former worlds. Particularly in the latter part of his career, he preferred to render scenes and objects that bear witness to adversity, to struggle, to time's relentlessly destructive impact and yet paradoxically creative presence and power. Richards painted headstones tilting in neglected graveyards, shipwrecks rotting on deserted beaches, and surf-beaten headlands crumbling into the sea. Remembrances of things past, his imagery conjures thoughts and themes of death, mutability, and loss.

Of melancholy, the literary critic Eleanor M. Sickels writes, "A more vague and amorphous subject, perhaps, it would be hard to find."[1] In the course of the word's long history, melancholy has accumulated multiple, overlapping, sometimes contradictory meanings, with understandings of its psychological and physiological nature, its sources, and its symptoms changing over time. In ancient and medieval physiology, *melancholia* (black bile) was one of the four cardinal humors, along with *sanguis* (blood), *phlegma* (phlegm), and *cholera* (yellow bile). Their balance or imbalance within the human body was believed to significantly impact health, behavior, and temperament. An excess of *melancholia*, for example, was thought to cause sullenness, brooding, and despondency. The doleful introspection it brought on, while painful, was also considered a generative source of creativity and philosophical insight. The Greek physician and philosopher Galen of Pergamon (c. 130–c. 210 CE) identified melancholy as the temperament of the artist and the scholar, an identification that has lasted in varied forms into the present.

The theory of the four humors faded away in the early modern period, yet the word "melancholy" survived, applied to a wide variety of mental states from the mild and "pleasing" melancholy of eighteenth-century England's Graveyard School poets to the agonies of what would now be considered clinical depression. It has encompassed despair, grief, mourning, sorrow, and nostalgia. Although many now would separate melancholy from depression, through most of the word's history, it has included depression even in its severest forms.[2] In the eighteenth century, the English poet Thomas Gray (1716–71), whose work Richards knew well, differentiated between white and black melancholy. The former, he wrote, causes little more than a vague feeling of ennui, but the latter "excludes and shuts its eyes to the most possible hopes and everything that is pleasurable; from this the Lord deliver us!"[3] For the Romantics, who followed Gray, and whose poetry and art, including the works of Thomas Cole (1801–48), Joseph M. W. Turner (1775–1851), and John Constable (1776–1837), Richards highly esteemed, melancholy was "that strange half-mystic sadness that seems to draw into the suffering self all the sorrows and vague regrets of humanity."[4]

Richards knew melancholy, all too well. Not only was he acquainted with its poetic and pictorial manifestations, but he also knew it from familial and personal experience. Two of his sons, Archer and Theodore, suffered episodes of severe depression, and Richards was subject himself to what he called "blue" moods.[5] Sometimes these were brought on by shortening days and the end of the summer painting season, as when he wrote to his friend and most important patron George Whitney in September 1884: "the autumnal weather which has come after the heat makes me feel as if the 'melancholy days' were coming."[6] At other times his melancholy arose from his work and what he described as "the pain of a certain sense of loss and the vague despair of the unattainable."[7] Negative reviews, anxieties about sales, fears that his style had passed out of vogue, even looking too long and admiringly at the works of great masters such as Turner and Claude Lorrain (1600–82) could fill him with feelings of futility, inadequacy, and despair. Yet work was also his bulwark against his blue moods: "I am pretty straight as long as I keep going, but get rather wobbly when I stop," he confessed to Whitney in 1880.[8]

While Richards dreaded the debilitating gloom of deep, dark melancholy, he intentionally cultivated it in its gentler, wistful forms. From his youth onward, he was attracted by what he described as the "charm of loneliness."[9] He wrote when still in his teenage years: "I am fond of solitary walks...mid wild tangled woods." That sentence launched an essay recounting an afternoon sojourn along Philadelphia's Schuylkill River. Taking a break from his work as a designer of ornamental metalwork, Richards set off "with a sketch book and some poems under my arm," following the river's banks until lured from them by an "old broken, carriage road, quiet and shady." It led onto the Lansdowne estate, laid out in the 1770s by John Penn (grandson of the state's founder, William Penn) and once described as the "best country house in America."[10] By the early 1850s, when Richards stumbled upon the estate, the mansion had been abandoned and the parkland and outbuildings were falling into disrepair. Richards followed the rutted path along a small brook and through a wooded dell to the ruins of a once elegant bathhouse. The artist was enchanted: "Strange mingled thoughts came crowding on the mind,...I thought of the many gay beings, the echos from whose glad voices had long, long since died away in the twilight shades of those green woods." He remained lost in reverie until the sun began to sink and "darkness came o'er the wood, as if to join its sisters Tranquility and Melancholy, the presiding genii of Old Lansdowne."[11]

Richards carried "some poems" with him that day—it is noteworthy that his sensibility as an artist was influenced and informed by his reading of literature, and of poetry

in particular. Perhaps among them was Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Written at Cwm Elan" (1811), which recounts musings "mid tangled woods" as twilight's "sister Night" settled over the wild landscape of Cwm Elan, a great Welsh estate owned by Shelley's cousin. In the writings of his favorite poets, including Shelley, William Wordsworth, Thomas Gray, Alfred Tennyson, and William Cullen Bryant, Richards found inspiration for both his solitary ramblings and the words with which he described them. In their writings too he found the model of "pleasing" melancholy, that half-sad, half-pleasant state of solitary reflection, which would be so essential to his own work.

In poetry, "pleasing" melancholy is associated most prominently with the works of eighteenth-century England's Graveyard School: Thomas Parnell's "Night-Piece on Death" (1721), Robert Blair's "The Grave" (1743), and Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1751) chief among them, all solemn meditations on human mortality and all set in graveyards. In a later eighteenth-century prose work indebted to their example, George Wright's *Pleasing Melancholy, or A Walk among the Tombs in a Country Church Yard*, the author explained the allure of cemeteries for those who are "fond of indulging serious meditations on the shortness of life, the certainty of death, and the vanity and emptiness of all sublunary things." Such melancholy thoughts, he asserted, could be both morally improving and spiritually elevating—even, to "the man of serious reflection," a source of "secret pleasure."[12] To spend quiet hours of reflection among the tombstones, surrounded by those who had passed before, was an occupation "naturally adapted" to chasten ambition, rebuke vanity, and strengthen faith.

The graveyard poets found a broad and appreciative audience in the nineteenth-century United States. Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" was among the nation's best known poems, memorized by schoolchildren across the country.[13] His elegy was not for a single individual, as was the conventional elegiac form, but rather for the humble unnamed dead of a rural English churchyard. The poet poignantly suggests that had they been born into other circumstances, their talents differently nurtured, they might have achieved worldly success and fame. With its themes of undeveloped human potential, death, loss, and mourning, the poem "expresses, in an exquisite manner, feelings and thoughts that are universal," as an outline for teaching Gray's elegy, published in an 1876 issue of the *New England Journal of Education*, observed.[14]

Richards likely could have recited some of the poem's best-known lines, among them "Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen / And waste its sweetness on the desert air." Certainly he knew the "Elegy" well. He contributed an illustration to an 1883 *Artists' Edition* of the poem, published in Philadelphia (fig. 1). The commission was one he was well prepared to undertake. Several years before, in 1880, while on an extended sojourn in England, he had escorted his family to the village of Stoke Poges in Buckinghamshire where Thomas Gray is buried and where the poem is believed to be set. He and his eldest daughter Eleanor painted watercolors in the churchyard. One of these became the basis for his contribution to the *Artists' Edition* (plate 73). In the sparkling watercolor, painted in warm complementary hues of red and green, an ancient yew arches its branches over a cluster of gray tombstones. In the book, the engraved variation of this composition illustrates the lines of the fourth stanza:

> Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
> Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
> Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
> The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The engraving by Arthur Hayman conveys more fully than the watercolor the poem's melancholy mood. Often in Richards's work, the emotional content deepened and darkened as he moved from his first sketches to his more carefully finished studio pieces, and in this case, it was almost certainly a later variation on his initial watercolor, one closer to the engraving, that Richards shared with Hayman. In the subdued black and white of the print, shadows settle over the scene and brief flowering blossoms, added in the foreground, create an affecting contrast to the long moldering graves. The larger implication is, of course, that these graves prophesy the fate that will befall all of us—a theme underscored by the gravestone in the lower left corner inscribed with the initials of the artist, "WTR."[15]

Richards had long been attracted to gravesides. As a young man, he made pilgrimages to the grave of the great American landscape painter Thomas Cole in Catskill, New York (1853) and to the burial place of the abolitionist John Brown in the Adirondacks (1864). In 1875, he wrote with delight to his friend Whitney describing an "antique grave yard"

ELEGY IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD. 11

Beneath those rugged elms,
that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many
a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

1. William Trost Richards, "Beneath That Yew-Tree's Shade," engraved by Arthur Hayman. From Thomas Gray, *An Elegy in Written in a Country Churchyard: The Artists' Edition* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1883), 11.

he had come upon in his ramblings near his new summer home in Newport, Rhode Island. He found the tombstones, the oldest dating back to 1681, tucked among the trees of an old apple orchard: "It was a neglected looking place. The long grass was uncared for, the burdocks grew in patches, the worm eaten apples lay in the grass...through the vista of the orchard I could see the sun shining on the long meadows, the rocks, the distant sea. While all this gave a picturesque sentiment to the scene, there were profounder suggestions of the early life, struggles and death of those who had cleared the woods, fought the Indians, and planted the orchards."[16]

Richards recorded the scene for Whitney in a watercolor *Old Grave Yard at Newport*

(1875, plate 61). Alternating bands of sunlight and shadow fall across the graves, the pattern created by light slanting through the leafy boughs of the gnarled trees. Lichens splotch the stones and pale green apples lie tumbled on the ground. A crumbling stone wall separates the burial site from the open meadows beyond. Rather than creating a composition that lingers on the graves, Richards arranged the tombstones at a diagonal leading directly to an arched opening amid the trees, framing a distant and alluring view of meadow and sea. With its bright summer sunshine, warm colors, and sprightly touches of the brush, the watercolor speaks more directly to the pleasure Richards took in his discovery of the graveyard than to the "profound" and melancholy thoughts that he related to Whitney in his letter. At the same time, the relation between the watercolor and Richards's graveyard meditations also draws out melancholy's complex and paradoxical nature: It is not solely dark and grim, but is also a source of pleasure itself, a stimulus to the making of art and to its aesthetic rewards.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, graveyards were just one of the subjects and settings considered conducive to pleasing and improving melancholy thoughts. The British poet Thomas Love Peacock (1785–1866), in the introduction to *The Philosophy of Melancholy: A Poem in Four Parts*, maintains that the "spirit of philosophical melancholy," which delights in the contemplation of "the universal mutability of things" is to be "felt in every scene and sound of nature; more especially, in the solemn grandeur of mountain-scenery, and in the ruined magnificence of former times."[17] The rising and setting of sun and moon, the changing of the seasons, the relics of devastation and decay, both human and natural, all elicit melancholic meditations on transience. Focusing our thoughts on them transforms our perspective on our own hopes and sorrows, our ambitions and frailties, setting their smallness into the vast continuum of time. For some, such thoughts are disquieting, for others, comforting, as they allow a more distanced perspective on personal troubles. For still others, they may stimulate what art historian Christopher Woodward describes as the "momentary euphoria" which comes "with the dissolution of the individual identity into a flow of humanity and Time."[18]

We can only speculate about how such thoughts affected Richards. What we can say with certainty is that, for him, the lure of ruins was strong. He had fallen under the spell of the collapsing bathhouse at Lansdowne when still in his teens and that fascination never left him. A ruin is a temporal bridge connecting past, present, and future. As the art historian Brian Dillon writes, a ruin is a "portal into the past" and, at the same time, it "casts us forward in time," predicting "a future in which our present will slump into similar disrepair."[19] Richards experienced ruins in exactly this Janus-faced way. Gazing on the "antique grave yard" in Newport, his thoughts were carried back to the struggles of Rhode Island's early European settlers, but in Italy, contemplating the decay and decadence of Florence and Rome, his thoughts turned back to his own country and its future; he wrote to a friend, "Where shall we find the spell that will guard against similar ruin?"[20] Here again, we may sense the paradoxical richness of melancholy, for the ruins are a sign of what is lost but also of what remains and what will come. The landscape is not empty: the ruins testify to the long years and many lives that came before, while simultaneously opening our vision to the many that will come after.

Among architectural ruins, Tintagel Castle on England's rugged Cornwall coast seems to have most powerfully transfixed Richards's imagination. He visited the castle in 1878, and over the following years it inspired at least ten watercolors and five oils.[21] The ruins' appeal lay in their picturesque siting—they cling to the edge of a high coastal cliff with the cold Atlantic lashing against its base—and to their historical and literary associations. Richards wrote of the site: "What is left of the castle and encircling walls is on the brink of a sheer precipice 300 ft. high….At the base are many caverns, one especially opens clear through the island, and the sea ebbs and flows through it." On his first visit to the site—"twilight on a cloudy day"—the "breakers were rushing through the caves with a sound more melancholy than anything I have ever heard."[22] Richards listens as well as sees, and in his artistic work we perceive the evidence of his sensory responses to melancholy features of land and sea. His watercolor *Arthur's Cave, Tintagel* (1878, plate 103) shows the foaming waters surging through the cavern's dark tunnel, crashing, booming, and whistling their mournful tunes.

Legendary associations with King Arthur deepened Tintagel's charms. In the twelfth century, Geoffrey of Monmouth identified it as Arthur's birthplace in his *History of the Kings of Britain* (c. 1138). In Richards's time, Alfred, Lord Tennyson chose to reiterate that legend in his *Idylls of the King* and other Arthurian poems. Richards quoted a line from Tennyson's "The Coming of Arthur" — "Tintagel castle by the Cornish sea"—in describing to Whitney his visit to the site. He refers to the ruins in that letter as "King Arthur's castle," yet he was fully aware that they dated from long after Arthur's time. He noted, "it is fabled that King Arthur was born there and there held his 'Table Round.'" But he adds, "There is no evidence of so early a structure, the ruins now remaining with the exception of some remains of Roman walls are about 500 or 600 years old."[23] Nevertheless, he was aware that, as Woodward has eloquently put it, "a ruin is a dialogue between an incomplete reality and the imagination of the spectator," and Richards wished to give full scope to that imaginative play.[24]

In *The League Long Breakers Thundering on the Reef* (1887, plate 169), one of his Tintagel oils, the viewer stands on a sliver of deserted beach at the base of the Cornwall cliffs, hundreds of feet below the castle. High up, on the precipice's rim, the ruins stand out against the darkening sky, yet they are so far distant that it is difficult to distinguish them from the castellated rocks on which they perch. The mood is forlorn and foreboding, and the viewer's situation is precarious. Unscalable walls of rock rise just behind the narrow beach, black storm clouds are gathering threateningly overhead, and waves are rolling in hard and fast, encroaching on the already slick sands. The dark rocks and crashing waves in the foreground are sharply focused and intensely real, heightening the feeling of danger. At the same time, the desolateness of the scene, the lack of period details placing it in a particular historical moment, and the ruins, their outlines softening in rising mist and dissolving in golden light, open the scene to imaginative possibilities. The emotional complexity of melancholy and the ease with which it meets and mingles with other moods are especially evident here, as the image evokes simultaneously melancholy and the Sublime. The most immediate emotion, prompted by the inrushing surf, is the frisson of fear and awe that we associate with the Sublime. But beneath and beyond that is the sad, wistful pleasure of summoning and imaginatively inhabiting the site's long storied past.

Richards encountered many melancholy scenes on his English sketching trips. Stonehenge, for example, was far more affecting than he had expected, "partly," he explained, "because of its lonely situation in the Middle of a wide undulating grassy plain…. It has that pathetic look peculiar to all human work which has reverted to Nature."[25] His quick watercolor sketch of the monument captures that lonely feeling, with the dark gray standing stones silhouetted against a lowering sky. The broad Salisbury plain stretches treeless in every direction from the tilting and toppled monoliths (1879, plate 71). The grazing sheep in the foreground, attended by a shepherd and his dog, described only by a touch or two of Richards's brush, make evident to the viewer the towering height of the massive stones. Yet while their presence offers us a scale for measuring the impressiveness of the prehistoric site, the figures carry on their quotidian activities oblivious to its mystery and power. Similar scenes of shepherds and herdsmen attending to their daily tasks amid the ruins of ancient civilizations would have been familiar to Richards from the work of artists he esteemed, including Cole, Claude, and Turner, and the melancholy notes of their works surely echoed in his mind as he painted this scene. His work shares with theirs the same theme: the evanescence of all human power and glory.

Richards found himself touched not only by prehistoric relics, but also by the much

more recent ruins of the Industrial Revolution. Hiking along the Cornish headlands, he was at first annoyed by the intrusions of mining shafts and chimneys, rusting engines and stamping mills, "black buildings and heaps of red debris" among the picturesque hills. But he came to feel their poignancy as the vestiges of a failed industry. Most of the mines were closed and the machinery had fallen silent, though "here and there," he noted, "some with desperate hope still worked," making "a clatter among the crags."[26] In his arresting pen-and-ink sketch, made for his family's homemade journal *Our Own Monthly*, pipes and wheels lie rusting amid the foreground ferns and sluices and winches crown the hills, nineteenth-century counterparts to the ruined temples of ancient Greece and Rome (fig. 2). In this private, familial image, Richards speaks to the nineteenth century's rhetoric of industrial progress, with its hard-driving forward focus. He suggests that as the pace of life quickens, we are moving ever more rapidly toward our own destruction. We stand already amid the ruins of our own times.

2. William Trost Richards, "Cape Cornwall," *Our Own Monthly* 3, no. 28 (Jan. 7, 1883).

Another form of recent ruins adds melancholy notes to Richards's beach scenes: the debris of shipwrecks. The beaches of the United States' Atlantic coast were just becoming in Richards's time places of recreational resort, crowded in the summertime with pleasure-seeking tourists. Richards rarely even hinted at that scene. His beaches are consistently deserted and desolate. Often, as in *Seascape (Coast of New Jersey)* (1870, plate 178) and *Shipwreck* (1872, plate 175), the only signs of human presence are the rotting remains of boats, broken spars, and skeletal hulls projecting from the sands. In *Seascape (Coast of New Jersey)*, the sand reaches out to meet our feet. We are invited to enter and amble along the shore, encountering one nautical ruin after another, an endless line of them it seems, drawing us toward the horizon. Yet the rolling surf is slowly burying the wreckage, erasing these relics of past traumas, these reminders of destruction and loss. This, together with the warm glow of the early morning sun shimmering on the wet sands, introduces a note of hope and healing into this grim and lonesome scene.

All is mutable. Richards understood that this is as true of nature's forms as of human creations. In choosing his subjects, he was often drawn to the margins of continents, to places where the boundary between earth and sea is in constant flux, "that mysterious and often tragic line where the waters meet the land," as one critic wrote in reference to Richards's paintings.[27] Roaming along the New Jersey coast during the summers from 1868 through 1873, Richards observed: "The sea, in its inroads on the beaches of New Jersey, has destroyed the woods of cedar and holly, which formerly grew to high-water mark in the vicinity of Atlantic City."[28] This was certainly the subject of his 1875 watercolor *How the Sea Kills the Trees*. That unlocated work's theme clearly resonated with Richards, for he returned to it in other paintings, perhaps most eloquently in *At Atlantic City* (1873, see fig. 11 in "*How the Sea Kills the Trees*" in this volume). This vertical oil describes a stretch of bleak and desolate shore, where the sea is encroaching on the woods. Although a sunset glows in grayed lavenders and pale oranges on the distant horizon, it fails to lighten the scene's mournful mood. Evening shadows have already fallen across the beach. Flocks of black birds are settling to roost in the dying evergreens, whose needles are brown and thinning. The surf is washing gently around the trees' bases, quiet yet insidious, for it is sucking the soil from around their roots and poisoning them with salt. In the foreground, a tree lies toppled on the sand, its bare roots grasping uselessly at air. All here speaks of the destructive work of time, of transience and death.

Richards felt a kinship with the tormented trees of *At Atlantic City*. Their broken limbs and falling needles spoke to their struggle for survival and that, to his mind, is what made them worth painting. Always, but especially so as he aged, he preferred subjects that bore the marks of time and adversity. In those marks lay the drama of his pictures. As he explained to his daughter Eleanor, an aspiring artist: "Everything in nature has two aspects, one as to its individual character, the other as to the modification of this character by circumstances. When you have exhibited character modified by circumstance you have made a drama....This is absolutely true from man to the lowliest weed of the field." Elaborating on this in a later letter, he wrote: "When a tree grows in an open space in perfect freedom from the first we may say it is a fine tree but we can never think of it as picturesque or as having had any experience....These we never select as best for pictures or ornament, only those which are twisted and curved, and give evidence of a fight for their lives." Study carefully the individual character of your subject, he advised her, seeking always to "give the dramatic modification which is the charm of its life."[29]

Signs of struggle and adversity are everywhere in Richards's landscapes. So too are traces of the past. Not just the human past. As an avid student of geology since his youth, he knew well that we walk on the ruins of earlier worlds. In the summer of 1879, Richards and his children set off from their lodgings in Charmouth on England's south coast to hike several miles along the beach to the town of Lyme Regis, famous then as it is today for its fossils. Along the way they filled their pockets with fossilized ammonites and belemnites and plesiosaur teeth. Arriving in Lyme Regis, they purchased more fossils and visited the home of a collector who had discovered a nearly complete fossilized skeleton of a plesiosaur (an extinct marine reptile), which he laid out on his parlor floor for the family to admire.[30] For Richards and his children (whose home schooling included a course on geology), such treasures conjured visions of the Jurassic era (200–145 million years ago) when their summer home was covered by a tropical sea "swarm[ing] with reptilian forms," including snake-necked plesiosaurs, as one of the family's geology texts informed them.[31]

With his knowledge of geology, Richards was always conscious of the long, deep history of the sites he painted. Lion Rock, in the Lizard district on the southernmost coast of England, appears in a number of his works, including two watercolors both entitled *The Cornish Lions, Cornwall* (n.d. and 1878, plates 45 and 70). In a letter to his friend Whitney, he describes the "dark and tragic character" of the coast, before launching into a long account of the Lions' geology: "Almost the whole of the Lizard district...is a lava bed.

On the coast, through the action of the sea and of frost, the rocks have been worn into the most fantastic shapes, and the color is peculiar to the serpentine of this district. Some masses are of a dark purple and bronze like color….Every fracture great or small is filled with steatite (soap stone) which by ready disintegration causes continual landslips. The great gray scar in the 'Lion Rock' shows where recently the face of the cliff has fallen away, and the whiteness is a thin layer of soap stone."[32] Even in an unfinished sketch such as *The Cornish Lions* (plate 44), the "great gray scar" is readily visible, a whitish scrim of pigment marking the site where a mass of rock detached and tumbled into the sea.

Richards knew that even obdurate rock eventually crumbles into dust. In the course of geological time, entire continents have risen from the seas only to sink again. Climates have fluctuated. Populations of plants and animals have appeared and disappeared. All of human history shrinks into insignificance when compared with the devastating vastness of geological epochs. A quotation in *Our Own Monthly*, the Richards family journal, from J. Dorman Steele's *The Story of Rocks* gives expression to such sobering thoughts: "As the stars sink, one by one in the west, new stars rise in the east, to be succeeded by the dawn and then the day, so through the night of the past sank the old life forms, to be succeeded by the new, approaching near to the dawn of the day in whose morning we live."[33]

In Richards's paintings of his own home Graycliff, which he and his wife designed and built on the sparsely populated island of Conanicut in Rhode Island in 1881–82, its lonely isolation is often the predominant theme. New housing had been closing in on their previous home in Newport so that, as Richards reported to Whitney, "All the charm of loneliness has gone out of our place."[34] Conanicut offered the seclusion and solitude they were seeking—the sort of retirement amid beautiful natural surroundings that had long been thought most conducive to philosophical melancholy.[35] In *W. T. Richards's House on Conanicut Island*, a watercolor of 1882 (plate 85), the shingle-style home appears poised one hundred feet above Narragansett Bay on the island's rugged headlands. Despite its elevation, the house does not dominate the scene. Instead it is dwarfed by the jagged, heaving masses of rock on which it perches. Their broken forms hint at the titanic forces that shaped the island's topography, from volcanic intrusions to Pleistocene ice sheets. The house appears small and fragile against the rock masses that rise before and behind it, underscoring human frailty in relation to the relentlessness of time.

In *The Road to the House of W. T. Richards on Conanicut Island*, another 1882 watercolor (plate 89), the approach to the house appears as a slight indentation in the ground. Were it not for the title, the road might go unnoticed, our attention distracted by the large, sunlit erratic boulder in the foreground, a relic of an ice age glacier, and the wild and forlorn character of the scenery. Richards's renderings suggest the lightness of the imprint that he and his family made on the island. This would prove prophetic: In 1899, less than twenty years after the Richards moved into Graycliff, the US government forcibly purchased the house and razed it to construct a military installation. Richards's loss of his home surely underscored his already acute apprehension of the evanescent character of all those persons and places and objects to which we attach ourselves.

Richards died on November 8, 1905. A writer for the *Philadelphia Evening Telegraph* conveyed the melancholy mood of his late fall burial, a mood consistent with the central concerns of his life and art: "And as [his casket] was lowered into the ground the dead leaves fell in showers upon the funeral party, giving to the last rites a poetic and artistic impressiveness that was so much in harmony with his life."[36] Falling leaves, collapsing buildings, surf-battered rocks—scenes of natural and human ruins that conjure half-sad, half-pleasurable thoughts of time's passing—lie at the heart of Richards's melancholy art.

I wish to thank Bill Cain and Wendy Greenhouse for their many astute and helpful comments on earlier drafts of this essay. I dedicate the essay to my friend Janet Headley who offered to read it just days before she passed away. She was, she told me, "an expert on melancholy."

1 Eleanor M. Sickels, *The Gloomy Egoist: Moods and Themes of Melancholy from Gray to Keats* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 1. Other important scholarship on melancholy includes Bridget Gellert Lyons, *Voices of Melancholy: Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971); Martin Middeke and Christina Wald, eds., *The Literature of Melancholia: Early Modern to Postmodern* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Jennifer Radden, ed., *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

2 The philosophers Emily Brady and Arto Haapala have argued that melancholy should be separated from clinical depression. See their "Melancholy as an Aesthetic Emotion," *Contemporary Aesthetics* 1 (2003), https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts_contempaesthetics/vol1/iss1/6/.

3 Thomas Gray to his friend Richard West, May 27, 1742, quoted in Edmund Gosse, *Gray* (London: Macmillan, 1889), 53.

4 Sickels, *Gloomy Egoist*, 252. Richards mentions his great admiration for Cole, Turner, and Constable often in his writings, though, unfortunately, usually without mentioning particular works. I do not have space here to argue for the melancholy nature of their art, but I would direct the reader to paintings such as Thomas Cole's *Desolation* in *The Course of Empire* series (1833–36, New-York Historical Society, 1858.5), Constable's *Hadleigh Castle* (1829, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, B1977.14.42), and Turner's early watercolors of Gothic ruins and oils such as *Shade and Darkness: The Evening before the Deluge* (1843, Tate Britain, London, N00531). On Richards's interest and knowledge of these artists, see Linda S. Ferber, *William Trost Richards (1833–1905): American Landscape and Marine Painter* (New York: Garland, 1980), esp. 10, 21, 305, 318–19, 329. Like all scholars who write about Richards, I am much indebted to Ferber's pioneering work.

5 Richards describes Theodore's and Archer's breakdowns in a letter to his daughter Eleanor Richards Price, May 18, 1888. References to his own "blue" moods appear throughout his writings. See, for example, WTR to James Mitchell, Feb. 3, 1856, Florence. William Trost Richards Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC (hereafter WTR Papers, AAA, searchable online at https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/william-trost-richards-papers-5663). The persistence of melancholia in later generations of the Richards family is discussed in two books by Jennet Conant: *Man of the Hour: James B. Conant, Warrior Scientist* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017) and *Tuxedo Park: A Wall Street Tycoon and the Secret Palace of Science That Changed the Course of World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003).

6 WTR to George Whitney, Sept. 15, 1884, Newport. WTR Papers, AAA.

7 WTR to George Whitney, May 30, 1880, London. WTR Papers, AAA.

8 WTR to George Whitney, May 3, 1880, London. WTR Papers, AAA.

9 WTR to George Whitney, Nov. 26, 1880, Newport. WTR Papers, AAA.

10 Robert Gilmor Jr., *Memorandums Made in a Tour to the Eastern States in the Year 1797* (Boston: Trustees of the Boston Public Library, 1892), 5, quoted in Mark E. Reinberger and Elizabeth McLean, *The Philadelphia Country House: Architecture in Colonial America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 327.

11 WTR, "Lansdowne," in *Humbly Dedicated to Marie*, 1850–51, manuscript. WTR Papers, AAA.

12 George Wright, *Pleasing Melancholy, or A Walk among the Tombs in a Country Church Yard* (London: Chapman, 1793), iii.
13 On the graveyard poets' popularity and influence in the United States, see Evert Jan Van Leeuwen, "Funeral Sermons and Graveyard Poetry: The Ecstasy of Death and Bodily Resurrection," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32, no. 3 (Sept. 2009): 353–71, esp. 367.
14 A. F. Blaisdell, "Outlines for the Study of Gray," *New England Journal of Education* 4, no. 19 (Nov. 18, 1876): 217.
15 I am grateful to Jeffery Howe for pointing this out to me.
16 WTR to George Whitney, Sept. 27, 1875, Newport. WTR Papers, AAA.
17 Thomas Love Peacock, *The Philosophy of Melancholy: A Poem in Four Parts with a Mythological Ode* (London: Shakspeare, 1812), vii.
18 Christopher Woodward, *In Ruins: A Journey through History, Art, and Literature* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 80.
19 Brian Dillon, ed., *Ruins*, Documents of Contemporary Art (London: Whitechapel Gallery; Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), 11.
20 WTR to James Mitchell, Feb. 3, 1856, Florence. WTR Papers, AAA.
21 Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 322.
22 WTR to George Whitney, Dec. 18, 1878, 20 Norfolk Terrace, Bayswater, London. WTR Papers, AAA.
23 WTR to Whitney, Dec. 18, 1878.
24 Woodward, *In Ruins*, 139.
25 WTR to George Whitney, Oct. 29, 1878, London. WTR Papers, AAA.
26 WTR, "From Land's End to St Ives," *Our Own Monthly* 3, no. 28 (Jan. 7, 1883). WTR Papers, AAA.
27 *Telegraph*, Sept. 7, 1900. Unidentified clipping, WTR papers, AAA.
28 Quoted in Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 245. I have drawn on Ferber's discussion of these paintings of the New Jersey shore, 244–47.
29 WTR to Eleanor Richards Price, Feb. 3, 1883 and Jan. 15, 1884, Germantown. WTR Papers, AAA. There is something wrong with the dating of the February 3, 1883 letter. Although it is dated clearly at the top of the page, it refers to the content of the letter dated January 15, 1884, a chronological impossibility. Could it be that it was misdated and was actually written February 3, 1884?
30 Theodore Richards, "Lyme Regis and Its Fossiliferous Cliffs," *Our Own Monthly* 3, no. 27 (Dec. 9, 1882). WTR Papers, AAA.
31 William Denton, *Our Planet, Its Past and Future; or, Lectures on Geology* (Boston: William Denton, 1872), 173. Herbert M. Richards's articles on geology in *Our Own Monthly* contain quotations from Denton's book. WTR Papers, AAA.
32 George Whitney to Henry Hill Collins, quoting WTR, Apr. 16, 1880, Philadelphia. WTR Papers, AAA.
33 J. Dorman Steele, *The Story of the Rocks: A Fourteen Weeks' Course in Popular Geology* (first published 1871), quoted in Herbert M. Richards, "A Sketch of Geology, Part II Chapter III," *Our Own Monthly* 3, no. 28 (Jan. 7, 1883). WTR Papers, AAA.
34 WTR to George Whitney, June 22, 1881, Newport. WTR Papers, AAA.
35 Amy Louise Reed, *The Background of Gray's Elegy: A Study in the Taste for Melancholy Poetry, 1700–1751* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924).
36 "Artist Richards' Body Carried to the Grave," *Philadelphia Evening Telegraph*, Nov. 11, 1905. Newspaper clipping, WTR Papers, AAA.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON ON ART: CALVERT VAUX, FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED, AND AMERICAN PRE-RAPHAELITISM

James D. Wallace

One of the striking features of William Trost Richards's art is his painstaking attention to minutiae. As one of his contemporaries, Henry T. Tuckerman, put it, "So carefully finished are his leaves, grasses, grain-stalks, weeds, stones, and flowers that we seem not to be looking at a distant prospect, but lying on the ground with herbage and blossom directly under our eyes."[1] This is clearly seen in his intimate early painting *Flora* (1859, plate 25). Particularly noteworthy, and in deliberate contrast to the Romanticism of the Hudson River School, are the modesty of subject and humility of perspective, as if he were (to quote Tuckerman again) applying "in practice the extreme theory of the Pre-Raphaelites."[2] Although he became a member of the Association for the Advancement of Truth in Art in 1863, he had for some years already been painting in this style. Another early work, *Blackberry Bush* (1858, Brooklyn Museum) was "directly inspired," Susan P. Casteras tells us, by his "having seen the 1858 exhibition of English art in Philadelphia."[3]

But Richards's works seem to reflect another spirit as well, one rather different from the works of British Pre-Raphaelites like John Everett Millais and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. In its celebration of the modest and the humble, Richards's art embodies the concept of a democratic art, an art appropriate to the ideals and aspirations of the nineteenth-century United States. My purpose here to trace that spirit back to the influence of America's "official philosopher" of the period, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82). I am not claiming that William Trost Richards had read and absorbed Emerson's writing about nature and art, but rather that Emerson's influence saturated American intellectual culture in the nineteenth century. To illustrate my point, I want to begin with an epiphanic moment in the short history of a dedicated American Pre-Raphaelite journal, the *New Path*.

In September 1865 the *New Path* published a letter from the architect Calvert Vaux (1824–95). Two months earlier, that same journal had briefly criticized one of Vaux's architectural designs as having "the appearance of a congress or convention of Mr. Vaux's country-seats, lacking, as it does, unity of design, breadth, and subordination."[4] Vaux's good-natured response was that he had been "amused at the description, which is not only the truth briefly expressed, but is a humorous way of putting it." But Vaux went on to justify himself by pointing out that the design was for a "Lunatic Hospital" and that he had worked under certain constraints:

> I was instructed by the Trustees to prepare the design in conjunction with Dr. Brown of the Bloomingdale Asylum. My province as architect thus became the interesting one of crystallizing, so far as I could approve, the ideas of a medical gentleman who had devoted his attention to this specialty, and had become eminent in connection with it. Under these circumstances the problem to be solved was not, what work of art would have the best general effect, but, what would best subserve the object intended to be gained—the improved health of the patients.[5]

Dr. Brown's instructions consisted chiefly of a number of things he wanted Vaux to avoid—things that might overstimulate the nervous inmates of the asylum: "All appearance of a public building...striking and unusual effects...long stretches of façade that should interfere with the idea of domesticity." Instead, the plan was to make the building resemble "a summer boarding-house, or a quiet common-place hotel, or a country-house of moderate pretensions" in order to be as soothingly normal as possible.[6] The *New Path*'s critique had prompted Vaux to reflect on the propriety and utility of his design:

> Perhaps, taking all risks into consideration, it would have been safer to have designed it as a whole, with a due degree of subordination, &c. Still I cannot help thinking that the way adopted is the "naturalistic" way of looking at it, at any rate, *i.e.*, let the problem solve itself honestly, and take the chance.[7]

Words like "naturalistic" and "honestly" hint at the ideological commitment behind Vaux's architectural practice, a commitment that Louis H. Sullivan would later formalize in a famous maxim, "form follows function."[8] In fact, Vaux's response is a good deal more Pre-Raphaelite than his critic's objection, with its implicit "rules" about "unity of design, breadth, and subordination" had been.

Vaux's letter marks a fascinating conjunction of forces in American cultural history. The *New Path* was founded in 1863 as the voice of American Pre-Raphaelitism, dedicated to promulgating the theories of John Ruskin and revolutionizing all the American arts.[9] Calvert Vaux was the partner of Frederick Law Olmsted (1822–1903) and contributed to the design and construction of New York's Central Park, Brooklyn's Prospect Park, and scores of other public parks, college campuses, private estates, and hospitals all over the United States. Vaux and Olmsted both subscribed to Ralph Waldo Emerson's conception of democratic arts as an inspiration and expression of a radically new American culture. Taken together, these concerns and commitments elicited some of the most characteristic of the American Pre-Raphaelites' paintings.

THE NEW PATH.

PUBLISHED BY THE

Society for the Advancement of TRUTH IN ART.

No. 1.] "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things that shall be hereafter." [May, 1863.

THE future of Art in America is not without hope if looked at from certain points of view. The artists are nearly all young men; they are not hampered by too many traditions, and they enjoy the almost inestimable advantage of having no past, no masters and no schools. The works themselves are slowly leaving the walls of the Academy. They have done their work, and done it, no doubt, to the extent of their ability; our business is only to bid them "Farewell," while we turn to greet the young Americans who are to

1. *The New Path* 1, no. 1 (May 1863).

THE NEW PATH

The Association for the Advancement of Truth in Art formed when a group of young New York painters, sculptors, architects, critics, and businessmen gathered at 32 Waverly Place on the evening of January 27, 1863: "Believing in the overwhelming power of the Truth, especially in Art, they had for some time seen the necessity of a united effort to revive true Art in America, and had assembled at this time to take counsel together, and if thought proper to organize an Association for the better promotion of the end just stated."[10] Members of the Association proposed to hold meetings to read papers, exhibit their works, purchase art of the approved type, and to "conduct" a journal "containing critical notices and essays, with any matter that may tend to advance the cause, and affording the Association a convenient medium for such appeals to the public as it may be expedient to make."[11] The concept of the "overwhelming power of Truth" was adopted from the criticism of John Ruskin, who had declared in an 1851 lecture that "Pre-Raphaelitism has but one principle, that of absolute uncompromising truth in all that it does, obtained from nature and from nature only."[12] Like Ruskin, these American Pre-Raphaelites embraced medieval art with its fervent religious commitment and rejected Renaissance painting for its artificiality and paganism.

The journal founded by the American Pre-Raphaelites was the *New Path*, which ran through twenty-four numbers from May 1863 (fig. 1) to December, 1865. The first issue printed a paper that the architect and art critic Russell Sturgis Jr. (1836–1909) had read at one of the Association's early meetings: "Our 'Articles' Examined" was its title, and Sturgis stressed the urgency with which Pre-Raphaelitism deployed the idea of "Truth," declaring "we know that these things that we care about are *not* matters of opinion. Either that figure is rightly drawn, or it isn't. Either Smith acts Shylock well, or he doesn't. If you and I disagree about these questions, it is because one of us is wrong, perhaps both. Let us, if we wish to act like rational creatures, try to find out where between—or outside—of us the truth may lie."[13] Sturgis also emphasized the importance of the unity of the arts—architecture, sculpture and painting—the dependence of each on the other two for "the full development of each."

Another, unsigned, article in the first issue proclaimed that the future of American art was "not without hope" in that American artists, "nearly all young men," were "not hampered by too many traditions, and they enjoy the almost inestimable advantage of having no past, no masters and no schools." The author breezily dismissed all previous American artists and their work: "We cannot justly rebuke them, because, after forty years' uninterrupted labor they have given us not a single work which we care to keep, for they have worked under influences hostile to study and the culture of Art, with no spur from within, and no friendly or sympathizing audience without. Good work has never been produced under such influences."[14] The "new path" into which American artists were being summoned was defined as "the earnest loving study of God's work of nature." Their program was ambitious:

> This is not only taught to the artist, but to the Writer, the Poet, and the Teacher. It is the moving spirit of the age in which we live; an age greater in all essentials than any that has preceded it, second to none in the purity and strength of its religious ideas; in its love of man, which is the best fruit of its love of God; in its tolerance, its enthusiasm, its energy, and in the widespread diffusion of wealth and education, which are saving it from selfishness and dillettanteeism [*sic*].[15]

In practice, this love of Truth meant a strict conformity to "the humblest facts of physical nature." The "right course for young Artists," according to the *New Path*, was to be "faithful and loving representations of Nature, 'selecting nothing and rejecting nothing,' seeking only to express the greatest possible amount of fact."[16] The theory can be seen operating in two comments from an unsigned article, "Good Work in the Academy Exhibition." The first comment is on *Spring Leaves* by Arthur Parton, a painting that featured a large weed at its center. Parton's error, though, was to tone down the other portions of his canvas in order to highlight the central weed: "The work is marred by the careless way in which some little tree stems, and a little pool at the top of the canvass, are painted. Then the color, except perhaps in the centre of the picture, is not natural, it is a very dark, dead green in place of the Creator's gorgeous, glowing green and gold."[17] The second comment, by contrast, praises its subject, *Dead Game* by James L. Scudder, despite the discomfiting nature of its subject, a heap of dead birds:

> But in one point, and that an important one, we can give it unqualified praise, viz. there is no attempt to make a *picture*, or to make the truth soft and pleasing; there were the facts, such as they are, birds, wall, oak leaves and he seems to have painted them, simply for love of the facts alone.[18]

For the Pre-Raphaelites, there is no higher praise than that a painter worked "simply for love of the facts alone."

The American Pre-Raphaelites, like their British cousins, were of course profoundly affected by the writings of John Ruskin (1819–1900); the first issue of the *New Path* printed a letter Ruskin had written in response to a query from one of the members of the Association for the Advancement of Truth in Art: Was it true that Ruskin had renounced his old opinions and now regretted "the delusions into which the author of Modern Painters had led so many well-meaning people"? Ruskin's response reassuringly proclaimed that "every year of my life shows me some higher and more secret power in Turner; and deepens my contempt for Claude." Moreover, Ruskin considered his own writing to be "demonstrations, or illustrations of truths: not expressions of opinion"; certainly a truth could not be changed or abandoned.[19] The close observation of nature, rendered in the field and not in the studio, without hindrance from any rules of composition or expression—such was the artist's task, and such was the credo of the *New Path*.

CALVERT VAUX AND FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED

Calvert Vaux was already a noted landscape architect before entering on his most famous project, the design of New York's Central Park, and his partnership with Frederick Law Olmsted. Born in London and trained there in architecture, he had been recruited in 1850 by Andrew Jackson Downing, "a man whom many in America regarded as the supreme authority on matters of cultivated living."[20] In a series of books and articles, including *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1841) and *Cottage Residences* (1842), Downing had developed a vision of beautiful buildings in a naturalistic setting, a vision that had a special appeal to "a generation of home-building Americans whose imagination had been captivated by the Hudson River School landscape painters."[21] After seeing a show of Vaux's landscape paintings in London, Downing invited the younger man to join him as an assistant (and, in short order, partner) in Newburgh, New York, and over the next two years they created a number of significant designs, including the grounds of the White House and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. Perhaps intending to help Americanize his English recruit, Downing read from Emerson during evenings at Highland Garden, his estate at Newburgh.[22]

What Vaux took from Emerson's thought was not only a deep appreciation of nature, but also something akin to Ruskin's insistence on close observation and rejection of academic "rules." In his book *Villas and Cottages*, Vaux made the case for a concretely American architecture: "Not something so new that it is unintelligible, but some distinctive characteristics that show it to be a genuine American invention," and he invoked a comparison to the oratory of Daniel Webster and Henry Clay to illustrate his point.[23] He then quoted Emerson on what could make something into a genuine American invention:

> Why need we copy the Doric or the Gothic model? Beauty, convenience, grandeur of thought, and quaint expression are as near to us as to any, and if the American artist will study with hope and love the precise thing to be done by him, considering the climate, the soil, the length of day, the wants of the people, the habit and form of government, he will create a home in which all these will find themselves fitted, and taste and sentiment will be satisfied also.[24]

These are sentiments, both material and moral, to which Ruskin would have subscribed, but with a nationalist twist supplied by the "wants of the people" and "habit and form of government." The free and unbiased study of the American environment will lead to an American art and architecture.

Vaux's attachment to Emerson was reinforced by his partnership with Frederick Law Olmsted. After Downing's death in a steamboat explosion in 1852, Vaux had taken another partner into the firm, but in 1857 he decided to enter the contest for the design of a new park in New York City and persuaded Olmsted to join him in the venture. "I first met Mr. Olmsted at the house of Mr. Downing at Newburgh," he wrote, and was led to ask him to cooperate with preparation of a competition design for Central Park because "I was interested in Mr. Olmsted's book [*Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England*], but mainly because at that particular time his days were spent on the park territory."[25] Olmsted's immersion in Emerson's thought had begun with the encouragement of a woman he much admired, Lizzie Baldwin (later Mrs. William Dwight Whitney). Late in life, ill and dispirited, he wrote her a letter in which he "recalled gratefully that she had persuaded him as a green young man that his rusticity and lack of education need not bar him from an intellectual life and that she had directed him to such sages as Ruskin and Emerson and Lowell, who encouraged him to respect and cultivate that instinctive, poetic love of scenery which later determined his profession."[26] Soon after this introduction, an Emersonian note of the moral force of nature began to show in Olmsted's writing and conversation. In 1850, as the secretary of the Richmond County [New York] Agricultural Society, he wrote an "Appeal to the Citizens of Staten Island" that included passages like this:

> With the Farmer must rise the Man. The mysteries of God are ever opening to his observation. Give us to read aright their unwritten word, and our hearts shall hear his voice. With increased knowledge of the operations of nature, with our eyes opened to a thousand wonders thitherto unseen, our sensibility to the Beautiful will be awakened. We shall mutually cultivate true taste, and its fruits will ripen not only to gladden our eyes by the adornment of our Island, but to nourish in our hearts all that is true and good.[27]

One can only imagine how the citizens of Staten Island were affected by this appeal from their Agricultural Society.

A more lasting influence of Emerson's thought, however, was reflected in Olmsted's lifelong appreciation for the quiet, modest beauty of nature. In a letter he read before the National Association for Sanitary and Rural Improvement, Olmsted illustrated his point by comparing the beauty of "a common wild flower" with that of a Japanese hybrid "shown us in a bunch of twenty, set in an enameled vase against an artfully-managed back-ground." Contrasting the humble native flower against the elegant import, he wrote:

> The latter is beyond comparison the more decorative, superb, attractive, only, perhaps, not quite as much so as it is rare, distinguished and—costly. But the former, while we have passed it by without stopping, and while it has not interrupted our conversation or called for remark, may possibly…have touched us more, may have come home to us more, may have had a more soothing and refreshing sanitary influence.[28]

2. William Trost Richards, *Red Clover with Butter-and-Eggs, and Ground Ivy*, 1860. Watercolors with glaze over graphite on paper, 6.8 x 5.3 in., Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, 37.1564.

Olmsted's appreciation of the beauty of humble nature was clearly shared by Richards, as shown in his exquisite watercolor of *Red Clover with Butter-and-Eggs, and Ground Ivy* (fig. 2). Near the end of his life, Olmsted wrote to a friend that he had always appreciated common beauty—"Not so much grand or sensational scenery as scenery of a more domestic order. Scenery to be looked upon contemplatively and which is provocative of musing moods."[29]

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

3. Southworth & Hawes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, c. 1857. Albumen print, 13.2 x 8.8 in., George Eastman House Collection, Rochester.

There are two concrete ways Emerson's thoughts help to shape American art. The first is in his emphasis on treating the humble and the homely, rather than the noble and elegant, as the subjects of art. In one of his earliest and most famous essays, "The American Scholar," Emerson (fig. 3) defined what an American art should portray:

> I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic; what is doing in Italy or Arabia; what is Greek art, or Provençal minstrelsy; I embrace the common, I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low....What would we really know the meaning of? The meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan; the ballad in the street; the news of the boat; the glance of the eye; the form and the gait of the body.[30]

This revolutionary conception of a thoroughly democratic art is the catalyst that shaped, for one, the poetry of Walt Whitman. "I was simmering, simmering, simmering;" he told John Townsend Trowbridge, "Emerson brought me to a boil."[31]

Second, and equally important, was the way Emerson's transcendentalism expressed the spiritual foundation for any work of art. In *Nature*, the book Emerson published in 1836, he posited that "Nature is the vehicle of thought" and parsed that concept "in a simple, double, and threefold degree":

1. Words are signs of natural facts.
2. Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts.
3. Nature is the symbol of spirit.[32]

In other words, human expression flows from nature, which flows from spirit. Nature mediates the connection between Absolute Spirit and the work of art: "Once inhale the upper air, being admitted to behold the absolute natures of justice and truth, and we learn that man has access to the entire mind of the Creator, is himself the creator in the finite."[33] *Nature* proclaims a transcendentalist arc, from pure materiality to pure spirit, in the titles of its first seven chapters: "Nature," "Commodity," "Beauty," "Language," "Discipline," "Idealism," "Spirit." Emerson begins with the crudest use and exploitation of nature as commodity and soars through refinement after refinement until arriving at the realization that "Nature is not fixed but fluid. Spirit alters, moulds, makes it. The immobility or bruteness of nature, is the absence of spirit; to pure spirit, it is fluid, it is volatile, it is obedient."[34] In a later essay, "Art," Emerson extended this idea:

> A dog, drawn by a master, or a litter of pigs, satisfies, and is a reality not less than the frescoes of Angelo. From this succession of excellent objects, we learn at last the immensity of the world, the opulence of human nature, which can run out to infinitude in any direction. But I also learn that what astonished and fascinated me in the first work astonished me in the second work also; that excellence of all things is one.[35]

Any subject—not just angels, saints, heroes—is appropriate for art, can be rendered "a reality." Emerson's transcendentalism is the basis for the democratization of art, for the republican aspirations we have traced through Olmsted, Vaux, the American Pre-Raphaelites, and back to William Trost Richards. The seed of Ruskin's ideas, so forcefully proclaimed in *Modern Painters*, fell on fertile ground in the nineteenth-century United States and gave rise to a particularly inflected version of Pre-Raphaelite practices.[36]

EPILOGUE

4. Albert Bierstadt, *Valley of the Yosemite*, 1864. Oil on paperboard, 11.9 x 19.3 in., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 47.1236.

On a recent visit to Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, I was strolling through the Art of the Americas galleries when I came across two oil paintings hanging within a few feet of each other. One was Albert Bierstadt's *Valley of the Yosemite*, which, though small by Bierstadt's usual standards, was a typically majestic scene (fig. 4).

The other painting was William Trost Richards's *Sunset on the Meadow* (fig. 5), only slightly larger but quite different in spirit. Where Bierstadt has sought to represent mag-

5. William Trost Richards, *Sunset on the Meadow*, 1861. Oil on canvas, 20.3 x 27 in., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1996.194.

nificent mountains, vast depth of space, and a luminist outpouring of light, Richards has focused on leaves and stems, tiny blossoms, and a pale, retiring sun. These are the qualities that mark Richards as an American Pre-Raphaelite; as one scholar has put it, "whereas the Pre-Raphaelites were concerned with meticulous and tactile detail, the luminists sought to evoke a state of mind through delicate tonal variations and an almost mirrorlike painting surface."[37]

We might note other differences between these paintings as well. Bierstadt's image is slightly blurry and misted over, pointing up the great distances involved, and his foreground is a tiny border featuring scattered animals to give a sense of scale to the march of mountains into the luminist infinity. For Richards, the foreground, with its rather drab but beautifully rendered leaves and blossoms, is the point; the background represents depth, but it exists only to support the foreground, and the sun is matter-of-fact, not the divine (and hidden) source of luminism. The Bierstadt painting strives for the epic, the Romantic, the ardent; Richards's picture avouches the homely, the humble, the familiar. Both express something essential to nineteenth-century American culture, but the deeper Emersonian strain resonates in the painting of Richards.

1 Henry T. Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists* (New York: G. P. Putnam and Son, 1867), quoted in Susan P. Casteras, *English Pre-Raphaelitism and Its Reception in America in the Nineteenth Century* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1990), 166.

2 Tuckerman quoted in Casteras, 166.

3 Casteras, 165. *The American Exhibition of British Art: Oil Pictures and Water Colors* was shown at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts from February 20 to March 20, 1858.

4 "Architectural Designs in the Academy," *New Path* 2, no. 7 (July 1865): 116.

5 "Note from Mr. Calvert Vaux," *New Path* 2, no. 9 (Sept. 1865): 150.

6 "Note from Mr. Calvert Vaux," 150.

7 "Note from Mr. Calvert Vaux," 150.

8 Actually, "form ever follows function." See Louis H. Sullivan, "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered," *Lippincott's Magazine* 57 (Mar. 1896): 409.

9 See Linda S. Ferber and William H. Gerdts, eds., *The New Path: Ruskin and the American Pre-Raphaelites* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1985).

10 The leading members of the group were Thomas Charles Farrer (artist who had studied under Ruskin), Clarence Cook (editor), Clarence King (geologist and critic), Peter Wight (architect), Russell Sturgis Jr. (architect), Charles Herbert Moore (painter), and Eugene Schuyler (diplomat). See Lawrence Wodehouse, "'New Path' and the American Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood," *Art Journal* 25, no. 4 (Summer 1966): 352.

11 "Association for the Advancement of Truth in Art," *New Path* 1, no. 1 (May 1863): 11.

12 John Ruskin, *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1851), quoted in Wodehouse, "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood," 351. See also Linda S. Ferber and Nancy K. Anderson, eds., *The American Pre-Raphaelites: Radical Realists* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2019).

13 Russell Sturgis Jr., "Our 'Articles' Examined," *New Path* 1, no. 1 (May 1863): 6.

14 "Introductory," *New Path* 1, no. 1 (May 1863): 1.

15 "Introductory," 3.

16 "Association for the Advancement of Truth in Art," 11.

17 "Good Work in the Academy Exhibition," *New Path* 1, no. 2 (June 1863): 22.

18 "Good Work in the Academy Exhibition," 24.

19 "A Letter from Mr. Ruskin," *New Path* 1, no. 1 (May 1863): 9–10.

20 Francis R. Kowsky, *Country, Park & City: The Architecture and Life of Calvert Vaux* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 11.

21 Kowsky, 12.

22 Kowsky, 126.

23 Calvert Vaux, *Villas and Cottages: A Series of Designs Prepared for Execution in the United States* (1857) (New York: Dover, 1970), 42–43.

24 Vaux, 43–44. The quotation is from Emerson's "Self-Reliance" (see Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays and Poems* [New York: Library of America, 1996], 278).

25 Vaux, "Memorandum," quoted in Kowsky, *Life of Calvert Vaux*, 96.

26 Laura Wood Roper, *FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 420.

27 Frederick Law Olmsted, quoted in Roper, 63.

28 Frederick Law Olmsted, "'The Highest Value of a Park': September 1882," in *Writings on Landscape, Culture, and Society*, ed. Charles E. Beveridge (New York: Library of America, 2015), 593–94.

29 Olmsted letter "To Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer," in Beveridge, 712.

30 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," in *Emerson's Essays and Poems*, ed. and intro. Arthur Hobson Quinn (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), 54.

31 John Townsend Trowbridge, "Reminiscences of Walt Whitman," *Atlantic Monthly* 89, no. 532 (Feb. 1902): 166.

32 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (1836) (Boston: James Munroe, 1849), 23.

33 Emerson, 64.

34 Emerson, 73.

35 Emerson, "Art," in *Essays, First Series* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1890), 280–81.

36 The first volume of John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* was published in 1843, with a US

edition in 1847.

37 Joseph S. Czestochowski, *The American Landscape Tradition: A Study and Gallery of Paintings* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1982), 24, quoted in Casteras, *English Pre-Raphaelitism*, 184.

EVERY ROCK HAS A STORY: A GEOLOGICAL JOURNEY THROUGH THE LANDSCAPES OF WILLIAM TROST RICHARDS

Ethan F. Baxter

Every rock has a story. That is what I tell my students in every class I teach, and every presentation I give. Every rock, every mineral, every grain of sand has a story to tell. Every boulder, every landscape, every continent too. These are the stories of the vast 4.5682 billion years[1] of solar system and Earth evolution, the records of which, however faded, exist within the materials of the Earth. A large part of the job of a geologist is to discover, extract, and interpret those ancient records and to weave as vivid a recreation of the Earth's past as we possibly can.

William Trost Richards's art famously depicts these same scenes, and stories, of nature. Crashing waves. Rugged sea cliffs. Lush forests. Serene landscapes. Towering peaks. In so far as an artist also tells a story with his art, Richards's storytelling here bears great similarity to the work of a geologist. What Richards sees in these landscapes he was so fond of painting may (or may not) have differed from what a geologist might see, but the purpose of communicating and inspiring the deeper stories of the Earth is the consistent goal. Richards's work is further distinguished in this regard due to the famous precision, realism, and literalism with which he conveyed and recorded the natural world. In the words of his friend, Harrison S. Morris, Richards "painted what he saw….He wanted the observer to see what he had seen and he set it down with the sense of proportion and the eye to justness which were his central traits of character….He looked out at nature in a reverent spirit. He had instincts to copy and to interpret. He never felt the need to add adornments of his own or to force his personality into the transcript. His was not the fame at stake, but nature's."[2] Or, perhaps we could say that it was not his own story Richards was trying to tell, but rather the story of nature, unembellished by his own whim, but rather artfully and passionately rendered as accurately and vividly as possible. This, too, is the sacred task and challenge of Earth historians (another term for geologists); to faithfully reconstruct the ancient stories of the Earth and its environments spanning billions of years through careful observation of the convoluted and hidden records in rocks and landforms left by nature itself, sometimes just one atom at a time. The geologist collects observations and data accurately—without embellishment or whim—and then must interpret that data as best they can. Careful and creative observation are at the roots of geology and all science; and observation is "the sister-sense to drawing" in the skilled, faithfully accurate landscapes of William Trost Richards.[3]

The landscapes and underlying rocks painted by Richards span at least a billion years of Earth history. In this essay, I will review—in order of geological history—aspects of this billion-year narrative through the lens of the rocks and landscapes of his paintings. We will dwell along the way on the unique stories of the Earth recorded by the rocks in each scene, reflecting on some of the scientific methods of observation and analysis that geologists have developed to extract these stories. Richards, the great observer of nature, lived and painted before most of these tools had been created. But there are hints that he would have been fascinated by the results as they reveal a deeper story, hidden from the eye of visual observation alone. In researching this essay, not only have I discovered the beauty of William Trost Richards's art, I have also discovered a surprising—almost familial—connection to Richards himself. Therefore, I have decided to use the first person in my narrative, partially as it permits me to more naturally describe my and my students' work at several sites Richards visited, and in part to share our surprising relationship. The connections and inspirations transcending art and geology are rich indeed.

BILLION-YEAR-OLD MOUNTAINS, BILLION-YEAR-OLD GARNETS

We begin with Richards's drawings near Lake George in New York State near its border with Vermont (plates 16, 18–21). These pastoral scenes mask the billion-year history of the rocks that lie below. Lake George lies within the easternmost flank of the Adirondacks, an ancient mountain range first formed by a major continental collision one billion years ago known as the Grenville Orogeny. An "orogeny" is the geological term for a collision of continental masses, including smaller "island arcs" (Japan is a good example of a modern island arc), creating intense deformation and mountain building within the collision zone. The Grenville Orogeny was one of the most expansive in Earth history stretching from Texas to Quebec, and was a key process in the assembly of the great supercontinent known as Rodina (Pangea is a more familiar supercontinent, but we will not get to that for hundreds of millions of years). The metamorphic and igneous rocks throughout the Adirondacks, and along the shores of Lake George, record the intense deformation, pressure of burial, and high temperatures experienced during the Grenville Orogeny. Among these rocks is a famous locality called Gore Mountain, just to the west of the scenes depicted in Richards's drawings (plates 19–20). At this site, Grenville-age rocks that experienced unusually high temperatures deep in the roots of these ancient mountains created some of the largest and most spectacular crystals of garnet known on Earth (fig. 1A). These garnet crystals are reported to have been up to one meter (!) in size[4] and have a deep ruby-red color accentuated by the jet black amphibolite rock that surrounds them. These garnets grew in response to the high temperatures brought about by the Grenville Orogeny; thus they record the story of the growth of those grand

1. Rock samples belonging to the author and the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Boston College. One centimeter green cube shown for scale. Photos: Jeffery Howe.

mountains a billion years ago, the remnants of which can still be found in the Adirondacks today. Of course when Richards painted these scenes from upper New York State, he had no idea the rocks beneath him were a billion years old. That confirmation did not come until after the tools of radio-isotope geochronology were first proposed and developed by Ernest Rutherford, Bruce Boltwood, and others near the turn of the nineteenth century.[5] The first geochronology relied on the decay of uranium to its stable daughter products helium and lead. The uranium-lead decay system remains the most powerful tool for geochronology to this day, especially when the mineral zircon is present in the rock to be dated; the geochemical pioneers who established the basis for modern radio-isotope geochronology are true heroes in the art of geological storytelling that modern geologists now employ. Dating the mineral garnet, however, represents a different challenge as most garnets do not have adequate uranium content to employ the U-Pb method. Therefore it was not until 1989 that the first attempt to directly date the famous Gore Mountain garnets was presented by A. R. Basu et al.,[6] confirming its one billion-year-old antiquity. These authors employed the decay of radioactive samarium (Sm) to its stable daughter neodymium (Nd), which has proven to be a useful tool for dating garnets.[7] In fact, the geochronology of garnet using the Sm-Nd decay system is one of the specialties of the lab I direct at Boston College. One of the co-authors of that 1989 study, Mukul Sharma (now a professor at Dartmouth College) later studied under Professor Gerry Wasserberg of the California Institute of Technology. Wasserberg was one of the pioneers of samarium-neodymium isotope geochemistry; Wasserberg's lab dated some of the first moon rocks brought back by the Apollo astronauts gaining it the name the "Lunatic Asylum." The advisor-student relationship in science is a sacred and meaningful one; similar I would assume to the relationship the apprentice has to the master in art, or in a trade. We learn not just our skills, but derive our inspiration from our advisors, and our advisors' advisors.

2. Boston College postdoctoral students Paul Starr, Steph Walker, and Katie Maneiro (L–R) with visiting scholar Jen Gorce (second from L) standing in front of a large block of Gore Mountain garnet amphibolite. Note the pride in their eyes.

This is how science advances, by passing down knowledge and vision and innovation and the inspiration to dig deeper from generation to generation. Gerry Wasserberg is my academic grandfather; he was the advisor to my own PhD thesis advisor, Professor Donald DePaolo, recently retired from the University of California, Berkeley. While I have never worked on the Gore Mountain rocks myself (though several of my postdocs collected there on a recent field trip [fig. 2]), I feel connected to those garnets because of my expertise in Sm-Nd garnet geochronology that I learned from DePaolo and Wasserberg before him, and from my academic relationship with Mukul Sharma (he would be like an uncle to me) who first dated them in 1989.

CRASHING WAVES ON AFRICAN SHORES

Anyone viewing a collection of Richards's paintings will not miss the distinctive seascapes from his Rhode Island home on Conanicut Island and nearby Newport (plates 121–33). These paintings include rocky shores, rolling grassy hills, and sharp cliffs almost always with vivid depictions of the sea. Richards is said to have spent hours simply staring

at the sea, studying the waves and their forms, their patterns, and how they interact with the shore when they meet. For a wave to crash, two things are thus required: the water of the wave and the rock of the shore. One of these paintings—*Newport Coast* of 1893—shows outcrops of a familiar continental igneous rock: granite (plate 191). This particular granite is named the Newport Granite, and is of Late Proterozoic age (~595 Ma [*mega annum*, or millions of years ago]).[8] Granites represent the essential ingredient in stable continents that are probably unique to our planet in the solar system; this rock appears in most of the Rhode Island rocky shores depicted by Richards. A broader look at Richards's landscapes shows that his work spanned two such continents—North America (where he lived and studied most of his life) and Europe (where he traveled ten times). However, perhaps the most remarkable thing about the granite rocks of Conanicut Island that adorn so many of Richards's most famous paintings is the revelation that this continental fragment is not, actually, part of North America. Rather, the rocks and granites of Conanicut Island are a fragment of the African continent, left here after another grand continental collision called the Acadian Orogeny about 400 million years ago. Little did Richards know...he lived on a little sliver of Africa! When the Newport Granite first crystallized from a molten magma deep within the crust, it was at that time part of an arc of islands off the coast of Africa, probably near modern day Morocco. Geologists have named this island arc complex the Avalon Terrane, or simply, Avalonia. Then, during the Acadian Orogeny 400 million years ago,[9] this Avalonian arc and North America collided—the second of three similar collisions in eastern North America that ultimately led to the formation of the great supercontinent Pangea. During this collision, a small fragment of Avalonia was pushed up and accreted onto the edge of North America along with several other terranes to the west that were caught up and intensely metamorphosed. Avalonia, however, was preserved relatively intact, including igneous rocks like the Newport Granite and layered sedimentary rocks from the African coast. These rare sedimentary rocks are of Late Proterozoic and Cambrian age and include some of the very earliest hard fossil evidence for life on the planet. Perhaps most notable is a rare species of trilobite (trilobites dominated the Cambrian seas) called Paradoxides. Paradoxides is distinctive due to its large size—over one foot in length! These rare fossils are found on just a few places on Earth including Morocco (fig. 1B), Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, the Boston Basin (fig. 1C), and the rocks near Conanicut Island and Newport.[10] The existence of this rare fossil on these continental fragments is strong evidence that they were once joined before being ripped apart during the breakup of Pangea that started about 200 million years ago. From Richards's extensive work on Conanicut Island, his home of eighteen years, we find that his art in fact spanned at least three continents: North America, Europe, and Africa. Little did he know of the exotic worldliness of these Rhode Island rocks he called his home when he painted them in the late 1800s, well before the discovery and acceptance of the theory of plate tectonics.

CONTINENTS COLLIDE—RISE AND FALL OF THE ACADIAN MOUNTAINS

In Gloucester, Massachusetts, Richards chose the Annisquam lighthouse as the centerpiece of another of his paintings (plate 141). The rocks beneath the lighthouse are also part of the Avalon Terrane. This is the Cape Ann Granite (fig. 1D) with a crystallization age of around 450 Ma, somewhat younger than the Newport Granite in Rhode Island. The exact origins of this granite are still debated, but it is likely related to rifting that may have separated Avalonia from the African continent (before they reconnected during the final collision of the African mainland about 150 million years later). The Cape Ann Granite was quarried in Halibut Point, Rockport just a few miles north of the Annisquam light. A mile further east one finds a famous outcrop of the Cape Ann Granite at Andrews

3. Boston College students walk along the granites at Andrews Point, Rockport.

Point.[11] This is a classic site visited by countless students of geology for decades (fig. 3) given the remarkably large euhedral (i.e., perfectly formed) crystals of blue-hued quartz (fig. 4). These spectacular crystals are part of a "crystal mush" floating on the top of this ancient magma chamber. The unusual chemistry, slow cooling, and watery content

4. Large blue quartz crystal at Andrews Point, Rockport.

allowed these giant crystals to form and accumulate. A rare iron-rich species of a brown mica called "annite" gets its name from its occurrence in the Cape Ann Granite. For a geologist, these euhedral crystals are a rare work of art.

Richards's painting of the grand mountains rising above Romsdal stream in Norway depicts one of the famous fjords once carved by glaciers flowing into the sea (plate 155). Richards's pilgrimages to Europe were hardly a departure from his New England roots geologically, but rather a reunion. The mountains of Norway were once joined with the mountains of Greenland and North America when these continents collided to form the beginnings of Pangea about 400 million years ago. Remarkably, the continental rocks in this part of Norway were partially subducted deep beneath North America or Greenland

before bobbing back up to the surface, where continents rightly belong owing to their relatively low density. However this journey toward the center of the Earth is recorded in spectacular green and red rocks found in Norway called eclogite (fig. 1E). Eclogites just miles from the scene depicted in this painting contain red garnet that has been dated in my lab back to 415 Ma.[12] These garnets and their particular chemical composition preserve a robust record of that deep continental subduction and subsequent return from the mantle.

Back in North America, just after those Norwegian eclogites formed during continental subduction, the intense heating of continental collisions during the Acadian Orogeny was transforming the rock of New Hampshire and Massachusetts into garnet-bearing metamorphic schists, and even melting rock to form garnet-bearing granites. These rocks exposed today were at the deepest roots of the Acadian Mountains that probably found their peak around 380 Ma. Garnet schists recording metamorphic temperatures in excess of 900°C can be found in Bristol, New Hampshire (fig. 1F).[13] These garnets have been dated between 399 and 380 Ma;[14] however they seem to have grown very rapidly during short spurts of heating, perhaps related to the passage of hot molten magmas. Nearby, the unusual garnet-bearing Kinsman Granodiorite (fig. 1G)—which outcrops on Mount Kinsman, among many other mountaintops in New Hampshire's White Mountains—similarly dates to 395–399 Ma[15] and may have provided some of the heat that drove the intense metamorphism in this area. Some of these "hot spots" throughout New Hampshire included evidence of hot fluids coursing through the rocks, carrying with them mineable resources. One such resource is graphite, which occurs in several small mines in central and southern New Hampshire, including a prominent deposit in Bristol. The Bristol mine is said to have been owned and operated by the father of Henry David Thoreau in its booming pencil making business of the mid-1800s.[16] Graphite from the contemporaneous Osgood mine (located further south in Nelson, New Hampshire, fig. 1H) has crystallized amidst ruby-red garnet crystals that also date to the same time period of heating, magmatism, and mountain building; about 407 million years.[17] Graphite from the Bristol mine was brought to Concord, Massachusetts where it was fashioned into pencils in a small factory also operated by the Thoreaus. These so-called Thoreau Pencils were apparently of quite high quality.[18] Given the time in which William Trost Richards created his first works of pencil art in the 1850s, there is a high probability that the pencils he used may have come from the graphite in the Bristol or Osgood mines, and the Thoreaus' pencil factory. Richards's numerous drawings and paintings of the White Mountains, including beautiful renderings of Mount Lafayette (plates 135–36), show the rocks of the Kinsman Granodiorite carved and smoothed by the glaciers of the last ice age. These New Hampshire scenes depict the origins of the deep hot processes that provided the very means for his pencil art: a beautiful circle in storytelling.

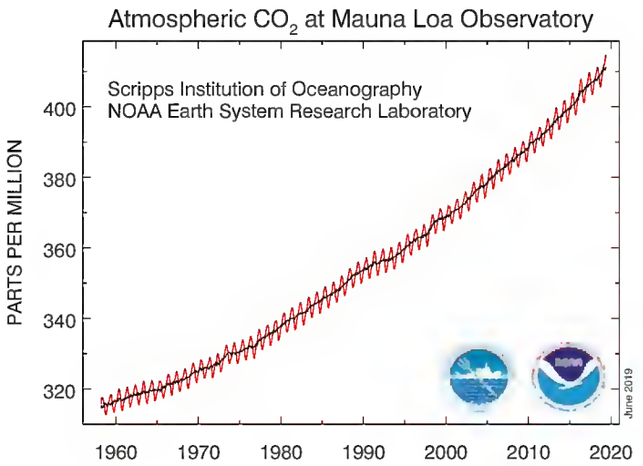
The ancient mountains in the East Coast of North America formed by the continental collisions that created Pangea from 450 to 300 million years ago were as tall as the Himalaya at their peak. During their rise and subsequent fall, years of weathering and erosion have exposed their deepest roots (in Massachusetts and New Hampshire) and removed the rest, depositing that sedimentary detritus into the adjacent ancient seas. The remains of one such giant wedge of sediment can be found in the Catskill Mountains of New York State. These thick sandy layers are red and brown and black and include within them an abundant record of ancient life that populated the shallow seas, coastlines, river deltas, and marshy swamps of the Paleozoic. Crinoids, brachiopods, primitive trees, and even some of the first amphibians can be found throughout the Catskills. Did Richards notice any of these fossils when he sketched *Catskill Clove* in 1853 (plate 16)? Note also the fact that the Catskill sedimentary wedge (in modern day New York) lies to the *west* of the ancient Acadian Mountains (centered in modern day Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire). This is vivid evidence that most of the interior of the North American continent—from New York to Nevada (most of California did not exist then)—was flooded by a shallow sea during this time period, the Devonian, from about 380 to 360 million years ago. Had Richards painted landscapes during that time, he would have found the West Coast much closer than it is today, permitting him to capture seascapes that would include muddy deltas, swamps, and primitive forests all framed by the towering Acadian Mountains to the east. Imagine the Devonian sunsets over his crashing waves!

THE AGE OF CHALK

Richards is well known for his seascapes, including countless scenes from the ancient Avalonian coasts of New England and the rugged cliffs of Cornwall, Dorset, and the Isle of Wight (plates 153–54, 166). The famous white cliffs of Dover tower over the English Channel, revealing their thick layers of white chalk. Similar chalk cliffs exist on the French side of the Channel in Normandy. These cliffs record another time of high sea level, warm climate, and vibrant ocean ecosystems from the Cretaceous period 145–65 Ma. This was one of the hottest times in Earth history, driven largely by some of the highest atmospheric concentrations of greenhouses gases—likely between 600 and 1,600 ppm CO_2—on Earth over the last 200 million years.[19] That carbon dioxide dissolved in the ocean and combined with calcium (derived largely from the weathering of the granite continents) to form the microskeletons of tiny marine plankton called coccoliths (fig. 5) with which those warm Cretaceous seas were teeming. Plankton represent the bottom of the marine food chain and thus their abundance in the Cretaceous created a rich marine ecosystem. When these marine plankton die, their microskeletons of calcium carbonate rain down onto the seafloor becoming the rock we know as chalk. Today, it is the remains of the Cretaceous seafloor that we see in thick chalk cliffs of Dover and Normandy (fig. 11). Indeed the term "Cretaceous" means literally, "Age of Chalk." These Cretaceous cliffs are a reminder of how high the seas can rise during a warmer climate. Realizing that chalk itself is almost half its weight in CO_2, it is also a record of the high level of CO_2 in the Earth's atmosphere and ocean that led to such warm conditions, widespread shallow seas, and vibrant marine ecosystems. Not to mention Tyrannosaurus Rex who also surely appreciated the hot weather! Last, as we look at Richards's painting of the chalk cliffs of Dorset and the Isle of Wight, it is important to realize that T-Rex—and all life on

5. Coccoliths, the primary constituents of chalk. Photo: Arkansas Geological Survey, *Algae World News*, July 3, 2016.

Earth—had millions of years to adjust and adapt and acclimate to the warmer Earth and the higher seas of the Late Cretaceous: a luxury we do not have today. In just the last sixty years, we have already seen the CO_2 in our modern atmosphere rise from 315 ppm to 415 ppm (fig. 6). In a way, Richards's paintings of the Catskill delta and the cliffs of Dover are reminders of the warming and sea-level rise to come if CO_2 continues to increase at that rate. That is not to say that the continents will be flooded as in the Cretaceous in a few hundred years; the topography of the continents is different today, and the ice sheets could take many thousands of years to melt fully. But the seas are rising and just how far they go will depend largely on actions taken in the coming decades of the Age of Humans: the Anthropocene.[20]



6. Atmospheric concentration of CO_2 measured at the Mauna Loa Observatory. Data are published and archived by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Earth System Research Laboratory, https://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends/full.html.

THE ALPS

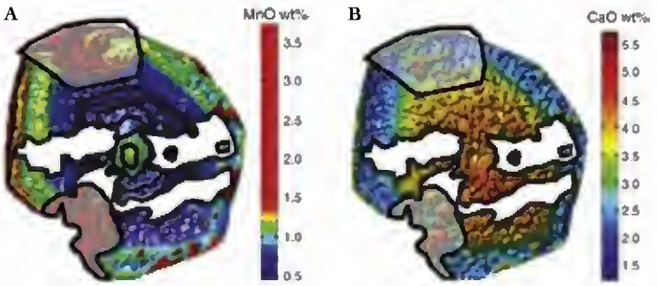
One of my favorite Richards drawings is that of *The Devil's Bridge* in Switzerland (plate 41, fig. 7). A very early field excursion in graduate school took us up this impossibly narrow valley—via train—to St. Gotthard Pass. As I recall, the train circled around in tunnel loops and bridges two or three times to scale the cliffs and get to the pass at Andermatt. The drawing of the Devil's Bridge itself shows—in all of its black and white pencil glory—the raw, rugged, powerful forces of tectonics that drove the Alps up beginning with the closure of the Tethys Seaway (the remains of which we now call the Mediterranean) just after the end of the Cretaceous. Indeed the Alps are still climbing higher today as the compressive forces between Africa and Europe persist.

Richards's paintings of the high Alps, including Grindelwald, the Lauterbrunnen Valley, and others depicting snowy slopes convey the majesty of these peaks, once matched or exceeded by the Acadian Mountains of New England 380 million years ago (plate 152). One thing that a geologist can see within such rocks is the vast amount of time required to do Earth's work. Much of my own research has taken place in the Alps of Switzerland, Austria, and Italy where these rocks record the story of shallow oceans swallowed up by the crashing continents. Deformed twisted rock—like the rock near the Devil's Bridge—results from the intense pressure of collision, and the transformation of metamorphic rock records the high temperatures and hot fluids that flowed throughout this modern active orogeny. One favorite sample of mine comes from the Austrian Alps (fig. 1J) near the Italian border south of Mayerhofen. Legend had it that giant garnets the size of baseballs could be found in some of these rocks. Inspired by the work of my advisor, Don DePaolo, and his former student John Christensen (who dated 380 million-year-old garnet from Vermont),[21] as well as the work of Mukul Sharma (who helped date the giant garnets from Gore Mountain), I invited a graduate student of mine—Anthony Pollington—to collect one of these garnets and attempt to measure its full growth history, from core to rim: not just when did it grow, but how long did it take to grow? If every rock tells a story, and if that history is recorded in minerals like garnet, just how long is that story?

7. The Devil's Bridge, Switzerland, c. 1865–70. Albumen print, 4 x 2.6 in., McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, Gift of E. A. Burns, 2016.260.

John Christensen was the first to publish such zoned garnet chronology using the rubidium-strontium decay system to reveal that large garnets in Vermont may have grown over as many as ten million years.[22] In my lab, Pollington pioneered the use of a microdrill device to mill out concentric growth rings—thirteen rings in fact—from a single large six centimeter garnet crystal. By measuring the samarium and neodymium isotopic content of each concentric growth ring, we hoped to create a continuous history of part of the rise and fall of the Alps. Zoned garnets like these are quite common. Akin to a tree ring pattern inside a giant oak, each concentric growth zone represents progressively more recent growth. The existence of tree rings and their temporal meaning are familiar to most observers of the Earth.

Given Richards's appreciation of trees evident in much of his landscape work (see plates 106–20), he too understood the largest among them as grand old sages of Earth's past: generations if not hundreds of years old. Richards generally preferred trees that



8. Garnet contains a "tree ring" record of mountain building: A) manganese and B) calcium composition maps of a large garnet from Stilluptal, Austria. Note the concentric pattern of growth illuminated by the chemical maps. Modified from Pollington and Baxter, 2010.

showed some signs of suffering or struggle, as these showed more character: "When a tree grows in an open space in perfect freedom from the first—we may say it is a fine tree but we can never think of it as picturesque or as having had any experience...only those which are twisted and curved and give evidence of a fight for their lives" interested him.[23] The beauty of trees—or rocks—may not always lie in their physical appearance, but rather in the remarkable stories they contain.

Geologists must be keen observers as well, only sometimes using analytical methods to illuminate stories otherwise missed by visual observation. The growth rings inside garnet are usually not visible to the naked eye, but a chemical map of certain elements

9. The Bristenstock looming above the village of Fluelen on the shores of Lake Lucerne, c. 1890. Photo: SBB Historic/Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 4.0).

like manganese and calcium can light up those rings (fig. 8). The Austrian garnet studied by Pollington and myself[24] revealed an eight-million-year growth history across its many rings, punctuated by rapid pulses, illuminating a record of grand tectonic processes as the Alps rose and deformed, twisting the very rock so vividly depicted in Richards's *Devil's Bridge*.

I turn now to spectacular scenes of the Alps. Richards's drawing of *Lake Lucerne* is a classic postcard image (plate 40, fig. 9) showing the lake's placid waters and the towering Bristenstock peak dominating the background. The small village of Fluelen lies on the far shore, just at the entrance to the long, deep gorge leading up to Devil's Bridge and beyond to St. Gotthard Pass, one of the major crossing points of the Alps from the Middle Ages

10. The Wetterhorn rising above the village of Grindelwald, 2007. Photo: Andrew Bossi/Wikimedia (CC BY-SA 2.5).

11. Jungfrau (center) dominating the skies above the Lauterbrunnen Valley with Mönch to the left, 2019. Author's photo.

12. Boston College student Anna Gerrits standing with a garnet-bearing eclogite below Monte Viso in the Italian Alps, 2017. Photo: Paul Starr.

to the present day. Bristenstock itself is over 3,000 meters tall, but it is dwarfed by even taller peaks further south and west, highlighted by the formidable triad of Eiger, Mönch, and Jungfrau, the latter of which is 4,158 meters high. Eiger has one of the most famous, and treacherous, climbing faces in the world and is best accessed from the scenic village of Grindelwald. Richards's *Alpine Landscape* of 1867 shows the easily recognizable peak of the Wetterhorn (plate 151, fig. 10) that looms over the village of Grindelwald from where he must have created this drawing. Eiger would be to the right of this southwest facing drawing. The high peak of Jungfrau is pictured in *Mountain Landscape with Figures* from within the adjacent Lauterbrunnen Valley (plate 42, fig. 11).

All of these peaks are part of the European mainland that were pushed together, deformed, and lifted to the sky during the recent—and ongoing—Alpine Orogeny. Further south one finds high alpine peaks such as the Matterhorn that represent continental fragments of an African island arc or microplate caught between the colliding European and African continents. Then below and behind (south of) the Matterhorn can be found expansive exposures of the ancient sea floor of the now-consumed Thethys Sea, thrust into high peaks such as those of Monte Viso (fig. 12), one of the most prominent peaks of the western Italian Alps. These oceanic rocks have been deeply subducted underneath the continent and, through an accident of chaotic tectonics inside this complicated "subduction factory,"[25] these fragments were then returned to the surface where they are exposed and observable today. Geologists such as myself and my students are studying these ancient oceanic rocks to follow and reconstruct an important—if somewhat surprising—story from these rocks: the story of water.

WATER IN THE ROCKS

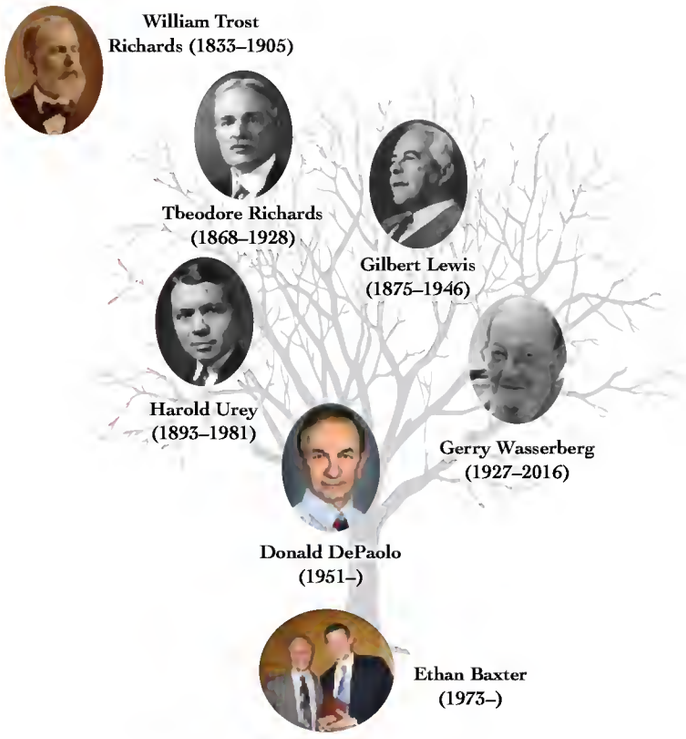
During its time on the ocean floor, the oceanic lithosphere (the crust and the rigid upper portion of the mantle attached below it) is penetrated by the ocean water itself within deep hydrothermal convection cells and fissures. With time, that water reacts with the rock of the oceanic lithosphere and creates hydrous minerals: minerals that actually contain water. A familiar and important example of such hydration products is the mineral serpentine (fig. 1K) that can contain about 15% water by weight. The serpentinization process is one of the most important on the planet, and has even been linked to the origin of life and proposed as a partial solution to global warming.[26] When serpentine (and other hydrous minerals) is subducted deep below the continents, the water is released again (i.e., dehydration) leaving new minerals in its place; one such mineral record of dehydration is garnet.[27] When I look at garnet, I see the story of water. The dehydration occurring within subduction zones is another key process on Earth as these fluids can then trigger large earthquakes,[28] and create melting of the deep mantle that feeds the largest, most explosive arc volcanoes on the planet.[29] Thus by collecting deeply subducted oceanic rocks containing serpentine and garnet we have the records of hydration and dehydration of oceanic rocks from which we can attempt to recreate that history of water. A former student of mine, Besim Dragovic, conducted such a study from subducted oceanic rocks collected on the island of Sifnos, Greece, and found a large garnet whose growth during subduction spanned eight million years. However, these "tree rings" revealed that a significant amount of water was released during just a few hundred thousand years (or less) showing a focused burst of dehydration during a narrow window of depth and time during subduction.[30] Today, our team is working on the subducted rocks of the Italian Alps near Monte Viso to further elucidate this story.

The water studied by geologists in subduction zone rocks is literally the same water that Richards so loved to watch and study and paint in the crashing waves of the sea. Of all the revolutions of the sea, each smack of a wave against a rocky shore, let us realize that much of that water had previously journeyed down toward the center of the Earth, carried within minerals like serpentine, before being released again leaving garnet in its place, and resurfacing in volcanoes before raining back onto the land and into the oceans once more. The source of Richards's water can be linked to the serpentine and garnet of the high Alps. Richards, of course, lived before the theory of plate tectonics had even been proposed, let alone accepted. So the notion that oceans' worth of water could be cycled between the Earth's deep interior and the surface would have been most foreign to him. Yet that role of water existed then as it does today, and represents part of the story of the rocks in his high Alpine scenes as well as the crashing waves on Conanicut Island and the southern English coastlines. Theodore Richards, Richards's son, recounted that the artist developed his own interest in rocks and geology from watching how the waves on the southern English coast interacted with the rocky cliffs.[31] Was his art partially inspired by geology? Or was his interest in geology partially inspired by his art? And for a geologist, can geology be partially inspired by art? Can science be inspired by art?

ALL IN THE FAMILY

William Trost Richards had a famous son in Theodore Richards (1868–1928). Theodore grew up with art all around him, developing a keen sense of observation, inquiry, and curiosity for the natural world from his father. Perhaps those earlier formative exposures to his father's observational art inspired him to extend his father's study of nature by pursuing a career in science: a career that turned out to be very successful. Theodore became a chemistry professor at Harvard University. He received the 1914 Nobel Prize in chemistry—the first American to do so—for his meticulous efforts to exactly determine the atomic weights of a large number of the chemical elements in the periodic table. Richards was also the first person to confirm by chemical analysis that lead produced by the radioactive decay of uranium and other parent elements has a different mass than natural lead.[32] This was a key discovery in the development of our understanding of isotopes, making him an important contributor to geochronology. Theodore Richards also maintained an interest in art himself, creating numerous paintings, though not of the same renown nor quality as his father's. However, this scientist-inspired-by-art was able to pass down his unique lens on the chemical building blocks of the Earth to his students.

One of Theodore's most notable PhD students was Gilbert Lewis. While Lewis never won a Nobel Prize like his advisor, he went on to a distinguished career in chemistry, defining the "Lewis dot structure"[33] model of electrons surrounding the nucleus of an atom: a central theme in how atoms interact and, ultimately, bond to create solids like rocks and minerals. A very simple visual, geometric model—with the elemental symbol at the center representing the nucleus and eight electrons arranged around the nucleus in four groups of two—it is a scientific work of art in its simplicity. Lewis dot structure is still a formalism taught in introductory chemistry classes. Lewis had a notable PhD student of his own, a man named Harold Urey. Urey is best known for two quite different contributions. First, he and his student Stanley Miller conducted experiments to simulate the Earth's early atmosphere and found that amino acids—the fundamental building blocks of DNA and life—could be generated abiotically. The "Miller-Urey Experiment"[34] remains one of the most heralded in the search for the very origins of life on Earth; it required a vision of the early Earth that no one had considered before. The second great discovery, which earned Urey a Nobel Prize of his own in 1934, was the discovery of deuterium, a second isotope of hydrogen.[35] With this discovery, Urey became the father of the nascent field of "stable isotope geochemistry" as he and his students began making measurements of the hydrogen and (mostly) oxygen isotopic composition of ancient rocks—like those chalk cliffs of southern England—to tell the story of the hot Cretaceous climate recorded in the isotopic composition of those rocks. Urey's work established the key tool of "paleoclimatology": the ability to reconstruct past climates spanning thousands



13. Geochemical genealogy connecting William Trost Richards's son, Theodore Richards, to the author.

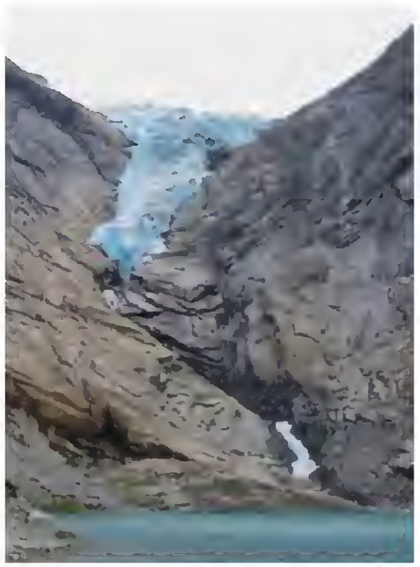
or millions of years.[36] But Urey's interests in, and contributions to, isotope geochemistry did not stop there. Like many chemists of his time, he was involved in the Manhattan Project that involved research into radioactive isotopes such as uranium for the purposes of creating nuclear weapons. Theodore Richards's early work on the atomic weights of uranium and radiogenic lead were part of the legacy that made this awesome and terrible research possible.

We have already discussed how long-lived radioactive elements such as uranium have also provided us with the key insight into our ability to reconstruct the Earth's past from the isotopic composition of rocks and minerals. Several of Urey's students went on to become pioneers of modern geochronology. One of those students was none other than Gerry Wasserberg, who founded the Lunatic Asylum and was a major player in early isotopic measurements of lunar samples. Wasserberg's graduate students and postdoctoral associates included Donald DePaolo and Mukul Sharma who carried on this legacy. Why am I telling you this? Because this leads to my own remarkable realization that I am related, academically speaking, to Theodore Richards—William Trost Richards's son. Don DePaolo was my PhD advisor and he taught me samarium-neodymium isotope geochemistry, which I have used to create the stories of rocks through the use of garnet "tree ring" dating. If we treat each advisor-student relationship the same as William and Theodore's true father-son relationship, we discover that I am the great-great-great-great-grandson (academically speaking) of William Trost Richards himself (fig. 13). Might there be just a tiny bit of inspiration from the art and vision of William Trost Richards passed down through his son and my scientific forebearers that exists in me still?

In my career, I have found that the stories of rocks can bring people together through the excitement of discovering unexpected connections—between the graphite of New Hampshire and Richards's drawings of the White Mountains, between Richards's home on Conanicut Island and the shores of Morocco, or between the water in Richards's waves and my research on subduction zone dehydration. The connection with William Trost Richards that I have discovered in preparing this essay is unexpected, and yet meaningful. For in the study of nature and the Earth, whether through science, art, or some other way of seeing and experiencing the Earth, we teach our students that all things are connected.

ICE: ROCK OF FUTURE SEAS

One more of Richards's paintings merits discussion at this time in our planet's history. *Briksdal Glacier, Norway* depicts a beautifully powerful waterfall of, well, frozen water forming a glacier with its characteristic powder blue color (plate 156). Ice may be the single most important mineral on the surface of our planet today. It is indeed a mineral—a naturally forming solid crystalline material with definite chemical composition—which makes glaciers a rock with remarkable rheological properties (rheology describes how solids deform and flow). The Briksdal Glacier is a small arm of a much larger glacial mass called Jostedalsbreen where it essentially drains and flows down a valley. Richards created his painting in the early 1900s just a few years before his death in 1905. It is said that he suffered from a great depression after the death of his wife and carried that melancholy with him in this, his final trip to Europe.[37] Perhaps it is somewhat fitting, therefore, that one of his final works was of a grand glacier, the sight of which brings melancholy to many scientists and citizens of the world who see it today. The Briksdal Glacier, and its parent glacier, have been slowly melting away. Actually, the Briksdal Glacier has melted more slowly and unevenly than most other alpine glaciers (due to uneven precipitation patterns), yet the truth today is spoken best by an image: a photograph of the glacier in 2018 (fig. 14). The difference between Richards's 1901 painting and the 2018 photograph is striking and illustrates the broader point. Land-based glaciers are melting due to warming temperatures and draining ultimately into the ocean. Glacier melting is responsible for about 21% of the observed sea-level rise from 1993 to 2018;[38] Greenland and Antarctica



14. The Briksdal Glacier, Norway, 2018. Photo: James and Jennifer Hamilton/MVDirona.com.

account for another 23%, and their contribution (especially Greenland's) is expected to increase in the coming years. Recent projections, including an accelerated melting of Greenland driven by recent observations, show that global mean sea level could rise by as much as two meters by 2100.[39] This in turn could result in the displacement and mass migration of up to 187 million people living in susceptible coastal population centers.[40] That is enough to make anyone melancholy. While the ice sheets melt and the seas rise in the coming decades, centuries, and millennia, it will be up to geologists to study the record of that most beautiful and pure of rocks—ice—and project the timing, location, and extent of ice sheet melting and sea-level rise to come.[41] Oh, Richards's beloved waves will crash higher and further as a new generation of scientists, and artists, capture their power and beauty.

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41 For example: J. D. Shakun et al., "Minimal East Antarctic Ice Sheet Retreat onto Land during the Past Eight Million Years," *Nature* 558 (2018): 284–87. N. B. P. Horton et al., "Mapping Sea-Level Change in Time, Space, and Probability," *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 43 (2018): 481–521. L. A. Stevens et al., "Relationship between Greenland Ice Sheet Surface Speed and Modeled Effective Pressure," *Journal of Geophysical Research: Earth Surface* 123 (2018): 2258–78.

WILLIAM TROST RICHARDS AND THE HIEROGLYPHS OF NATURE

Jeffery Howe

> Every man's condition is a solution in hieroglyphic to those inquiries he would put….Let us interrogate the great apparition, that shines so peacefully around us. Let us inquire, to what end is nature? —Ralph Waldo Emerson[1]

> The Maker of this earth but patented a leaf. What Champollion will decipher this hieroglyphic for us, that we may turn over a new leaf at last? —Henry David Thoreau[2]

The landscape paintings and drawings of William Trost Richards (1833–1905) reveal an obsessive concern to depict nature honestly and with scrupulously observed detail. In part, this was the desire of a proud craftsman to perfect his technique and to compete with the British and American Pre-Raphaelites, but his pictures also respond to a wider discourse on the developing understanding of nature and the environment. This dialogue grew out of contemporaneous cultural and scientific developments, and is reflected in his choice of subjects, and the manner in which he portrayed them. How to understand the meaning of life and humanity's role in nature is perhaps *the* perennial question, and is still central to our understanding of our responsibility to the environment.

The development of modernism was rooted in conflicting worldviews. Richards came of age in the era of Charles Darwin (1809–82), who published his groundbreaking *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* in 1859, bringing the opposing views of scientists and theologians to the fore. Although he was deeply curious about the science of geology, which forced a revision of the biblical time frame of the creation of the world, Richards was also grounded in traditional religious and Romantic interpretations of nature. He admired the work of Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz (1807–73), a brilliant but flawed scientist who studied glaciers and propounded the theory of a great ice age in the geologic past.[3] In this era art and science were linked by close observation and study.

Humans experience the world through all their senses, but sight is paramount for visual artists. Landscape paintings freeze a moment of the constantly shifting scene, and these static images seem to suggest a visual language. The forms are created by the artist, but the tantalizing question is whether these forms also correspond to a code embedded in nature, reflecting the intentions of an all-powerful creator, or were simply the result of natural processes. The mysterious and striking images found in hieroglyphs provided a key metaphor for interpreting the visual facts of nature, and united the discourses of nineteenth-century artists, scientists, and philosophers, all of whom sought to find meaning in the manifestations of nature. The concept of nature as a hieroglyph was rooted in a sacramental view of the landscape, and fleshed out by philosophers, theologians, scientists, and artists.

Richards's earliest writings are steeped in a spiritual response to nature, with frequent quotes from Romantic poets such as William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878). As an artist he was dedicated to his craft and also to the search for meaning. It should be noted that although there may be a spiritual impetus to his landscape paintings, they do not need to include overt religious symbols. The land itself is sacred and numinous, as will be seen through analysis of his remarkable drawings and paintings of trees, mountains, and seascapes.

THE SACRAMENTAL LANDSCAPE

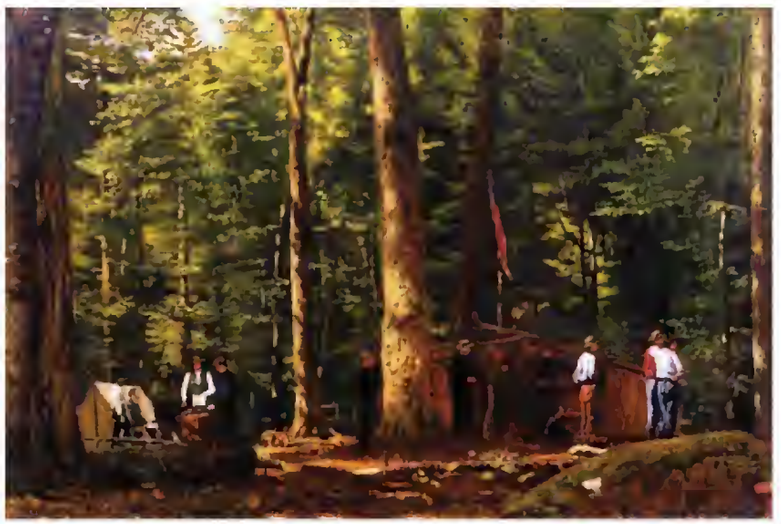
> Art is the representation of the work of God in the visible creation, independent of man. —Asher B. Durand[4]

Spiritual and moral uplift was a primary justification for artists in American society, which had long emphasized utilitarian practicality. Increased travel to Europe brought greater exposure to the arts, and even clergymen underwent a "conversion experience," returning home as advocates for the arts.[5] Many agreed with John Ruskin (1819–1900), who declared that "the duty of the painter is the same as that of a preacher."[6] Although Bible stories were favorite subjects for ministers and writers, visual artists found that nature served their purposes just as well. They found support in scripture itself, a psalm of David asserting: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork."[7] Landscape became the dominant genre in American painting and meshed with the founding myth of American identity and exceptionalism, the belief that unspoiled nature was uniquely granted to American culture. Significantly, one of Richards's earliest patrons was the Reverend Elias Lyman Magoon (1810–86), who enthusiastically endorsed the idea that the external world was a form of divine picture-writing: "The book of nature, which is the art of God, as Revelation is the word of his divinity, unfolds its innumerable leaves, all illuminated with glorious imagery."[8]

The first great artist of the Hudson River School, Thomas Cole (1801–48), proclaimed that the gift of unspoiled nature was still available to all who would open their eyes to it: "We are still in Eden; the wall that shuts us out of the garden is our own ignorance and folly."[9] At the same time, he felt that this earthly paradise was slipping away; he lamented

the squandering of natural resources from careless exploitation. He anticipated environmental concerns with his call for thoughtful development: "In this age, when a meager utilitarianism seems ready to absorb every feeling and sentiment, and what is sometimes called improvement in its march makes us fear that the bright and tender flowers of the imagination shall all be crushed beneath its iron tramp, it would be well to cultivate the oasis that yet remains to us, and thus preserve the germs of a future and a purer system."[10] Cole saw only too clearly the cost of environmental destruction: "Yet I cannot but express my sorrow that the beauty of such landscapes are quickly passing away—the ravages of the axe are daily increasing—the most noble scenes are made desolate, and oftentimes with a wantonness and barbarism scarcely credible in a civilized nation."[11] The symbolic motif of tree stumps, indicating the clearing of the forests by settlers or the widespread environmental destruction of the railroads, has been much studied[12] and ecological themes and ecocriticism have emerged as a leading topic, most recently demonstrated by the exhibition *Nature's Nation: American Art and Environment*.[13]

The negative effects of commercial progress were already a concern for Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–59), who published his diary of travels in America in 1835, lamenting



1. William James Stillman, *The Philosophers' Camp in the Adirondacks*, 1858. Oil on canvas, 19 x 30 in., Concord Public Library.

that "in but few years the impenetrable forests will have fallen. The noise of civilization and of industry will break the silence of the Saginaw.... It is this consciousness of destruction, this arrière-pensée of quick and inevitable change that gives, we feel, so peculiar a character and such a touching beauty to the solitudes of America. One sees them with a melancholy pleasure; one is in some sort of hurry to admire them."[14]

Richards's early Pre-Raphaelite works are anti-touristic and anti-materialist, depicting humble corners of nature that are not conventionally picturesque or commercial. He was passionate about nature, and approached it with a spirit of curiosity and reverence. In 1879 George W. Sheldon praised Richards's view of the Atlantic City coast for finding hidden depths in a seemingly banal subject: "'At Atlantic City,' which we have engraved, was exhibited in the Paris Salon of 1873, and is now in Mr. Joseph Ferrel's private collection in Philadelphia. It is a subject too barren to attract many artists very strongly, but Mr. Richards's treatment of it has made it positively picturesque."[15] Linda S. Ferber and Rebecca Bedell have both uncovered profound significance in similar images of the struggle for existence on the border between sea and land, particularly in connection with a lost painting titled *How the Sea Kills the Trees* and another version of *At Atlantic City* (1877, plate 106). Most of his paintings avoid signs of industrialization. His *Woodland Scene* (1878, plate 120) and *Early Summer* (1888, plate 146) show quiet corners of nature that have escaped commercial development, and his rocky coastline paintings represent locations impossible to build on or exploit.

As American cities grew dramatically in the second half of the nineteenth century, the lure of the simple life in nature grew to mythic stature. The appreciation of landscapes, both real and painted, was imbued with nostalgia that grew stronger as the experience of nature became less common. Camping for pleasure became a means to recapture this direct contact. The most famous attempt to rebuild a life of deliberation and mindful experience of nature was Henry David Thoreau's extended sojourn in the woods recounted in *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (1854). The poignancy of his thirst for primeval nature was expressed later in *The Maine Woods* (1864): "Talk of mysteries!—Think of our life in nature—daily to be shown matter, to come in contact with it—Rocks, trees, wind on our cheeks! the *solid* earth! the *actual* world! the *common sense! Contact! Contact! Who* are we? *where* are we?"[16]

In 1858 a remarkable crew of ten philosophers, artists, poets, and scientists went camping for several weeks in the Adirondacks.[17] The group included Ralph Waldo Emerson, the geologist Louis Agassiz, the writer James Russell Lowell, the artist William James Stillman (1828–1901), and several guides. Stillman's painting of this gathering, originally titled *Morning at Camp Maple: Adirondack Woods*, shows Emerson standing still and alone at the center, while those on the right practice target shooting (fig. 1). On hearing that Emerson planned to take part in his first hunting party, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow declined to join the group, saying that if the inexperienced Emerson had a gun in his hands, "somebody will get shot."[18] Nonetheless, this grouping of artists, scientists, philosophers, and wilderness guides demonstrates the breadth of approaches to nature, all sharing a focus on visuality in their respective enterprises.[19]

2. "The Hunters' Camp in Lansdowne Ravine" at the Centennial Exposition, Philadelphia. From *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Historical Register of the United States Centennial Exposition, 1876* (New York: Frank Leslie's, 1877), 86.

The enduring national myth of America was the belief in an unspoiled natural wilderness, waiting for the intrepid pioneer or tourist. Stillman's *Study on Upper Saranac Lake* (1854, plate 11) shows a highly detailed foreground, with closely observed tree trunks and bark representing elm, birch, and pine trees framing a view of the still surface of the lake stretching to the distant shores and mountains. It is influenced by the writings of John Ruskin and the paintings of the British Pre-Raphaelites, and by Stillman's own extensive experience camping in this region.

At the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, a popular exhibit was the "Hunters' Camp," a three-sided lean-to known as an Adirondack Shelter (fig. 2). Richards likely used such shelters in his early journeys in the Adirondacks. Even as the frontier diminished, the rugged life of the hunter was celebrated with a camp exhibited at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The camp was a log cabin built by the Boone and Crockett Club, a group founded by Theodore Roosevelt in 1887. The growing desire for contact with nature and fresh air led to the creation of the first summer camps, beginning in 1881 with Camp Chocorua on an island in Lake Squam in New Hampshire, an area often painted by Richards (plate 134).[20]

The experience of primitive life while camping was thought to improve health and encourage moral development away from the pernicious temptations of urban life. The stress of urban living was widely seen as deleterious to physical and mental health, the result of human evolution not keeping up with technology. In 1881, Dr. George Monroe Beard catalogued these negative effects in *American Nervousness: Its Causes and Consequences* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons). Beard popularized the term *neurasthenia* for nervous exhaustion, which could result from the anxieties of life in the city, or the hard life of the farmer. Although Beard favored treatments with electricity as the most effective cure for nervous exhaustion, other physicians were recommending rest, fresh air, and the quiet life at camp as an antidote for tensions exacerbated by overcrowding, streetcars and railways, and the insidious pressure of clocks, which increasingly ruled daily life.[21]

For American artists, camping trips in the Adirondacks and sojourns at the new hotels in the White Mountains of New Hampshire provided subjects for paintings and functioned as virtual artist colonies. The quest for primitivism and the direct experience of nature paralleled European artists' search for primal authenticity in locales such as Brittany and even Tahiti.

William Trost Richards shared the Romantic sentimentalism concerning the spiritual lessons of nature. In 1850 he wrote an essay on "Flowers," declaring that the "purest and most holy lessons may be learned from Nature" and that "of all those living oracles, that are around us, and beneath and above us—that are dwelling in earth and air, in sea and sky, none teach lessons sweeter, or purer, or holier, than those which are written in glowing characters upon the small petals of each opening blossom."[22] The linkage of nature and divine purpose enforced a moral seriousness on the artist. In another early essay, "The Spirit of Toil," he insisted that the beauties of nature were only given meaning by their uplifting qualities: "All things around us, with the powers and hopes within are urging us to earnestness....If it were not so, then the splendours that Nature flings so lavishly around us, and the glad thoughts, that come like companies of angels, crowding the temple of mind would be meaningless and inefficient for their mission."[23]

Richards's patron Rev. Magoon was a passionate advocate for the moral and spiritual benefits of nature and art. In an important essay on "Scenery and Mind," he argued for a mystical link between external nature and the soul:

> Every rational inhabitant of earth is a focal point in the universe, a profoundly deep centre around which every thing beautiful and sublime is arranged, and towards which, through the exercise of admiration, every refining influence is drawn. Wonderful, indeed, is the radiant thread that runs through every realm of outward creation, and enlinks all their diversified influences with the innermost fibres of the soul. This is the vital nerve by virtue of which the individual is related to the universe, and the universe is equally related to the individual.[24]

The essential question was, how could this panoply of creation be interpreted? Magoon concluded that nature and art required trained and serious interpreters: "The master-scenes of nature, however, like the masterpieces of transcendent art, require for the inexperienced, yet earnest admirer, an interpreter; to the lukewarm and careless they are ever partially, if not completely, incomprehensible."[25]

Philosophy, science, art, and poetry all focused on deciphering the riddles of nature, and art and poetry were still seen as equal to the sciences in this quest. The shared affinities of painting and poetry were embodied in Asher B. Durand's painting of *Kindred Spirits* (fig. 3), an homage to Thomas Cole, the founder of the Hudson River School who had died the previous year, and the nature poet William Cullen Bryant. The two figures are not explorers nor woodsmen, but gentlemen out for a walk in nature, shown stopping to contemplate the mountain valley. Slender trees arch over them, enclosing them in a circular composition. The title refers not only to the shared bond between the writer and the poet, but to their spiritual link with nature as well.

Richards found inspiration in literature throughout his life, especially in Romantic poetry. William Wordsworth was one of his favorites; in 1876 he wrote to George Whitney: "Every day I feel more deeply the strong influence of inanimate nature over heart and brain; I go to Wordsworth with a fresher sense of all he meant, and find in him that which is 'as true as the Bible'—How much I wish I could say to others, some little of what he says to me."[26] Wordsworth was one of the founding figures of Romanticism,

3. Asher B. Durand (1796–1886), *Kindred Spirits*, 1849. Oil on canvas, 44 x 36 in., Crystal Bridges Museum, Bentonville, 2010.106.

credited with introducing a new naturalism in his writing, linking his perceptions of nature and the English countryside to a higher reality. Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour" encapsulated many themes of Romantic concepts of nature, including the Sublime, the recognition of the role that the viewer plays in completing a work of art—"what they half create, And what perceive…"—and the divine origin of nature.[27] Richards's contemporary William James Stillman also endorsed Wordsworth's Romantic view of nature and art, and declared it valuable to all humans, though most especially artists.[28]

Light has long been taken to be the most appropriate analogue to the divine. In his early essay on "Sunlight" (1850–51), Richards wrote: "And the sunlight with its never fading brightness, and its magnificence unchanging is fit emblem of its Great Creator. Aye! And it is the handwriting that He has stamped upon his universe; not the handwriting that gleamed in fiery lines along Belshazzar's Palace wall, blazing out like livid lightning, telling of black Discord, and Despair, and Death!—but bright, glorious characters, such as the old Evangelist saw beaming out from angel records, speaking of sweet Harmony, of Love, of Hope, of Life!"[29] Not just sunlight, but all the aspects of nature reflected the character of the divine to those who saw the hand of God in all things.

ABSORPTION IN NATURE AND ART

Many in the Romantic and realist movements urged losing the sense of self and the individual ego in the contemplation of nature. Barbara Novak observed that American art was distinguished by a "more complete elimination of ego," especially compared to Romantics such as J. M. W. Turner or Caspar David Friedrich, or later impressionists or expressionists.[30] Richards generally eliminates human figures or signs of their presence to avoid distraction from the unmediated view of the landscape. In his personal struggles with faith, he confessed that abandonment of personal ego did not come easily: "Sometimes I think that I have never understood, much less realized, what *self-abandonment* really means. Not the old Quaker self-abandonment, but that which rejects righteous self as well as wicked self, and finds its *all* in Jesus."[31] In the same letter, Richards confesses that organized religion offered little guidance for him; as he found it to be in a state of "utter & irretrievable confusion & that any attempt to set it right will meet with the saddest kind of failure." In the end, he had to forge his own path, and based it on his studies of nature.

By allowing one's consciousness to open and be absorbed in the contemplation of nature, one could attain a sense of unity with the divine. Ralph Waldo Emerson described this state of mind in *Nature* (1836): "Who looks upon a river in a meditative hour, and is not reminded of the flux of all things? Throw a stone into the stream, and the circles that propagate themselves are the beautiful type of all influence. Man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine."[32]

It is through such meditative contemplation that one becomes aware of the external forces larger than the self, and the transcendental realities. In a witty and proto-surrealist drawing (fig. 4), Christopher Pearse Cranch (1813–92) illustrated Emerson's most famous quote on dissolving one's ego in the face of the cosmos. Emerson described the sensation of "Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God."[33] The impossible image of a transparent eyeball captures the goal of total ego-less visuality in contemplation of nature.

As early as 1853, the young Richards expressed similar sentiments in a letter to his friend James Mitchell: "Every experience is teaching me more and more fully the great lesson that there must be brought to every great labor a spirit of self-abnegation that will make us forget that there is fame or position or convenience…that will teach us that if we would work truly it is not so much for ourselves, as for the advancement of the character of the whole human nature, and thus will purge from our purpose all selfishness and vanity."[34]

Asher B. Durand had also insisted that humility was the hallmark of a great artist, for whom considerations of style were secondary: "It is a mistake to suppose that Raphael and other earnest minds have added anything of their own to the perfection of their common model. They have only depicted it as they saw it, in its fullness and purity, looking on it with childlike affection and religious reverence. Ever watchful that no careless or presumptuous touch should mar its [creation's or nature's] fair proportions."[35] Durand was echoed by Ruskin, who declared that "a great idealist never can be egotistic. The whole of his power depends upon his losing sight and feeling of his own existence, and becoming a mere witness and mirror of truth, and a scribe of visions."[36]

4. Christopher Pearse Cranch, *Standing on the Bare Ground…I Become a Transparent Eyeball*, 1837–39. Ink on paper, 8.4 x 5.7 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1976.625.20(1).

Ruskin insisted that artists should not flaunt their personal subjectivity, but serve as a neutral instrument for representing the natural scene: "The artist is a telescope—very marvelous in himself, as an instrument. But I think, on the whole, the stars are the principal part of the affair….And the best artist is he who has the clearest lens, and so makes you forget every now and then that you are looking through him."[37] This was not always achieved, since artists were also expected to differentiate themselves with originality and stylistic innovation.

The sought-after transparency of style performs a dual role: the seeming objectivity disguises the presence of the artist, and provides a clarity that absorbs the viewer into a quiet contemplation of nature. Durand reconciled realism and idealism in this way: "Realism, therefore, if any way distinguishable from Idealism, must consist in the

acceptance of ordinary forms and combinations as found...the term Realism signifies little else than a disciplinary stage of Idealism...for the ideal is, in fact, nothing more than the perfection of the real."[38] He explained that the close imitation of nature was a form of worship: "It is by reverent attention to the realized forms of Nature alone, that Art is enabled by its delegated power to reproduce some measure of the profound and elevated emotions which the contemplation of the visible works of God awaken."[39] Seen in this light, the new scientific knowledge of evolution and geology would not contradict the artistic response; on the contrary, it helps one understand and see deeper into nature. Ruskin, himself a keen amateur geologist, asserted that scientific training was necessary for the artist.[40] Even so, Ruskin insisted that scientific knowledge was not enough; to avoid deadening the sense of wonder, an artist's temperament was required.[41]

NATURE AS A HIEROGLYPH

One of the oldest metaphors for understanding landscape is still intriguing today; the richly figured hieroglyphs of the Egyptians are a model for sign theory. W. J. T. Mitchell has written that "like money, landscape is a social hieroglyph that conceals the actual basis of its value. It does so by naturalizing its conventions and conventionalizing its nature."[42]

A hieroglyph is a visual image known or suspected to contain a message. It is defined as a symbol or picture used in a writing system to denote an object, concept, sound, or sequence of sounds, originally and especially in the writing system of ancient Egypt. These mysterious and often beautiful signs were the springboard for an immensely popular metaphor, that nature was the hieroglyphic message from God to humans. The key to interpreting the Egyptian hieroglyphs was lost for centuries, and their encoded message remained a tantalizing mystery. This made a powerful metaphor for the understanding of the meaning of nature and the assumed divine plan. Nineteenth-century artists used intuition, philosophy, and science to explicate these enigmas. When finally decoded, many actual hieroglyphic inscriptions often proved to be quite banal, but the aura of mystery still clung to them. Like all writing, hieroglyphs were time machines, inscribing messages to memorialize the past and to be read or contemplated long in the future. At the same time, hieroglyphic images are beautiful and compelling, composed of natural shapes including birds, insects, and human forms. It was a short leap to imagine the landscape as a series of images, shifting through time, but frozen in the paintings and watercolors of the artist. Even topographical images could be imagined to contain concealed messages.

5. Models for Chinese hieroglyphs formed by insects and plants from Kircher, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, 3:18.

6. The Rosetta Stone, 196 BCE. Granite, 45 x 28.5 x 11 in., British Museum, London, EA24. Author's photograph.

7–8. Henry Morton, *Report of the Committee*, 37 and 58.

Nature was viewed as a coded message, a reflection of divine intention and a source of spiritual regeneration by many nineteenth-century European and American Romantic writers and artists.[43] Rooted in biblical exegesis, the hieroglyphic interpretation of nature paralleled modern semiotic theory. The external facts of nature were considered to be the coded message of God, to be understood in the mind of the viewer. This was further developed in the sign theory of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), wherein the work of art is considered the product of the understanding of the viewer who interprets the object made by the artist.[44] Both trinities are dynamic relationships. Nature and the work of art are defined as the intersection of the intentions of the creator and the understanding of the interpreter.

The interpretation of hieroglyphs had deep roots in Romanticism and Renaissance art theory. Hieroglyphs intrigued Leon Battista Alberti and Albrecht Dürer, and both invented their own hieroglyphic designs.[45] In the seventeenth century, the polymath Jesuit Athanasius Kircher (1602–80) devoted a large text to his purported translations of Egyptian hieroglyphs and Chinese characters.[46] In one hallucinatory plate (fig. 5), he suggested that the origin of Chinese characters was inspired by the sight of plant leaves overlapping, and the patterns formed by crawling ants—a fantasy designed to show the role of divine intention in the formation of these sign systems that were rooted in nature.

It was not until 1822 that Jean-François Champollion published the first accurate translations of Egyptian hieroglyphs, based on his breakthrough with the Rosetta Stone, which had been discovered in Egypt in 1799.[47] The parallel inscriptions in Greek, Egyptian demotic characters, and hieroglyphs allowed him to realize that the hieroglyphs were essentially phonetic, and not simple ideograms (fig. 6). Although the hieroglyphs undoubtedly began as a form of picture writing, they became symbolic notations for sounds in the Egyptian language. This misunderstanding took a long time to be recognized, and many nineteenth-century authors continued to use the term hieroglyph as a synonym for pictograph, or ideograph. The idea that images of real things could convey

9. Seth Eastman (1808–75), Dighton Rock in Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes of the United States*, from Matt Johnston, *Narrating the Landscape: Print Culture and American Expansion in the Nineteenth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 103.

complex meanings was not inherently unreasonable, and can be seen today in the popularity of emojis, which have even been used to translate Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.[48]

An English-language translation of the hieroglyphic text of the Rosetta Stone was undertaken by the Philomathean Society of Philadelphia, and published with color lithographs in 1859.[49] The amateur artist who illustrated this volume, Henry Morton, reinforced the association of hieroglyphs and nature by alternating illustrations of Egyptian scenes with Romantic images of ferns and flowers (figs. 7–8).

The deciphering of the hieroglyphs by Champollion in the early nineteenth century led to renewed interest in hieroglyphs as a model for sign theory, and American writers Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, and Edgar Allan Poe found that even nature could be interpreted using a hieroglyphic model.[50] As previously cited, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in *Nature* that "Every man's condition is a solution in hieroglyphic."[51] Emerson further defined the symbolic aspect of the visible world: "Nature offers all her creatures as a picture-language...because nature is a symbol in the whole and in every part."[52]

The parallel of hieroglyphs with nature was taken as a logical consequence of the belief that nature was a form of physical communication from God, a divine text waiting to be read. Early in the Romantic movement, Wilhelm Wackenroder (1773–98) made the link between nature, art, and hieroglyphs explicit in his *Outpourings of an Art-Loving Friar* (1797): "Art is a language quite different from nature, but it too, in similar and mysterious and secret ways, exercises a marvelous power over the human heart. Art speaks through pictorial representations of men; that is, it employs a hieroglyphic language whose signs we recognize and understand."[53] This analogy was repeated frequently throughout the century in Europe and America. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), who was so influential on American philosophers, wrote that: "Flowers are the beautiful hieroglyphics of nature with which she indicates how much she loves us."[54] Rev. Magoon similarly asserted that: "Every material object was designed for the use and reward of genius, to be turned into an intelligible hieroglyphic, and the memento of purest love."[55]

Reverend Thomas Starr King (1824–64), a famous Unitarian minister and early environmentalist who was instrumental in the preservation of Yosemite as a national park, also wrote about the White Mountains of New Hampshire: "Nature is hieroglyphic. Each prominent fact in it is like a type; its final use is to set up one letter of the infinite alphabet, and help us by its connections to read some statement or statute applicable to the conscious world."[56] This metaphor was also echoed by Henry Ward Beecher, who preached that "nature is hieroglyphic."[57] In one of his published sermons, Beecher wrote that "the great globe is but an alphabet, and every object upon it is a letter; and, from beginning to end of the Bible, these sublime letters are used to set forth in hieroglyphic the truths of immortality."[58] Henry David Thoreau, pondering the mystery of nature in *Walden*, compared leaves to hieroglyphs.[59]

Richards's contemporary John La Farge (1835–1910) paraphrased Eugène Delacroix on the communicative role of art, which uses visible objects as signs: "'Painting,' says Delacroix...'is an art in which we use the picture of a reality as a bridge to something beyond it....For our imagination, of course, is an arrangement of our memories—just as our sight is. We see through our memory.'"[60] Delacroix's journal clarified the parallel between the work of art and a hieroglyph: "These figures, these objects, which seem the thing itself to a certain part of your intelligent being are like a solid bridge on which imagination supports itself to penetrate to the mysterious and profound sensation for which the forms are, so to speak, the hieroglyph."[61]

Egyptian art and hieroglyphs were often associated with memorials, and sacred sites of memory. The obelisks chosen for the Bunker Hill Monument (1825–43) and the Washington Monument (1833–84) are but two of the most visible signs of the nineteenth-century cult of Egyptomania. Richards often sought out key sites in America that reflected his values, such as Mount Vernon (plate 22) and others associated with George Washington, or John Brown's grave. The silent tombstone stood for the iconic figure of the Civil War, and the cataclysmic conflict that followed Brown's death.

Native American petroglyphs were also taken as mysterious riddles of a lost era, both in North America and Central America.[62] Seth Eastman's depiction of the glyphs on Dighton Rock in Massachusetts incongruously juxtaposes the modern white man seated atop the monument, perhaps contemplating the message of this relic of the vanished tribe (fig. 9). Picture-writing was considered by Emerson to be an earlier, more primitive, and perhaps purer means of communication.[63]

The riddles of ancient civilizations were pursued in their monuments and inscriptions. Elihu Vedder's *The Questioner of the Sphinx* of 1863 shows a seeker straining to hear

10. Elihu Vedder (1836–1923), *The Questioner of the Sphinx*, 1863. Oil on canvas, 36.3 x 42.3 in., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 06.2430.

11. Earl Edward Sanborn (1890–1936), *Hieroglyphics*, stained glass window, after 1928. Bapst Art Library, Boston College. Author's photograph.

answers from the lips of a gigantic sphinx buried in the sand (fig. 10). The sphinx was one of the most complex symbolic motifs, and was the subject of a poem by Ralph Waldo Emerson.[64] Nature was itself a sphinx, guarding its mysteries. Emerson posed the fundamental questions in his essay *Nature*: "What is matter? Whence is it? and Whereto?"[65] He clearly anticipated Paul Gauguin's philosophic conundrum in his great painting *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* (1897–98, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).[66] The central role of hieroglyphs in the creation of language is even commemorated in the stained glass windows of the Bapst Art Library at Boston College, perhaps as a nod to the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher (fig. 11).

CORRESPONDENCES

The Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) detailed the correspondences between the things of this earth and the realm of the divine. He wrote: "The whole natural world corresponds to the spiritual world, and not merely the natural world in general, but also every particular of it."[67] Swedenborg based his theory on earlier mystics who declared that the visible world was a concrete mirror of the invisible world—"As above, so below" was a common mystical formula. Swedenborg took the ancient metaphor of a "great chain of being" between God and the things of the earth, linked in a vertical hierarchy of spirit and value, and the lower orders were signs of the higher orders that could be interpreted by humans.[68] It was an updated Neoplatonism that found meaning and spiritual essence in rocks and minerals as well as animals and "higher" beings.

Many artists and writers were keenly interested in Swedenborg, who inspired the Church of the New Jerusalem that flourished in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[69] Notable adherents included William Blake, and the American artists George Inness, William James Stillman, and Daniel Burnham.[70] Swedenborg was also much admired by Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wrote in *Nature* in 1836: "The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister, is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them."[71] He continued: "It is not words only that are emblematic; it is things which are emblematic. Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact. Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind, and that state of the mind can only be described by presenting that natural appearance as its picture." Emerson raised the question of whether these embedded messages were but fantasies of the viewer: "Have mountains, and waves, and skies, no significance but what we consciously give them, when we employ them as emblems of our thoughts? The world is emblematic. Parts of speech are metaphors, because the whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind. The laws of moral nature answer to those of matter as face to face in a glass."[72]

The theory of correspondences inspired much poetry, art, religion, and even science. Seen and unseen affinities linked objects and ideas, images and memories, emotions, and colors and sounds, tastes, and scents. Charles Baudelaire's poem "Correspondences" from *Les fleurs du mal* (1857) provided an essential catalogue for later symbolist theory. The metaphor of nature as an encoded hieroglyphic image was also popular with ministers and travel writers.

Asher B. Durand wrote of the spiritual message of the landscape, and his intimate depictions of woodland glades have reminded many of William Cullen Bryant's "Forest Hymn" which proclaims that "the groves were God's first temples."[73] Contemporary with Richards, Walt Whitman in *Leaves of Grass* (1855) wrote that the grass is a "uniform hieroglyphic."[74]

The two editors of the *Crayon*, William James Stillman and John Durand (1822–1908, the son of Asher B. Durand) were enthusiastic admirers of Swedenborg. Stillman credited his discovery of Swedenborg's teachings in helping him to escape the restrictions of his harsh Puritan upbringing.[75] John Durand, who joined the New Jerusalem Church, may have been led to Swedenborg's doctrines through the influence of Henry James Sr., who contributed to the *Crayon*.[76] Hiram Powers must also have communicated to Richards his own interest in Swedenborgianism, perhaps when Richards visited Powers in Florence in 1855 on his first trip to Europe. Writing to his fiancée Anna Matlack of his "religious progress," Richards noted, "I am continually recurring to Swedenborg's theory of the Mediation and Trinity...and it has indeed been a glorious light clearing away much doubt."[77]

To decode these hieroglyphs of nature, intelligence and intuition were required, and perhaps even the capability of spiritualist mediumship. Although certainly no mystic, Richards attended at least one séance in the home of Powers in Florence. Powers's interest in Swedenborg and spiritualism is well known; he hosted séances by the noted medium Daniel Dunglas Home in Florence, and even tried to contact the spirit world on his own.[78] These efforts were not always successful; Richards wrote to a friend that "we were all vainly waiting at one of his tables for spiritual manifestations."[79] The correspondences between the earthly and spiritual realms may be indicated in Powers's sculpture *Clytie*, which is a personification of earthly love yearning for the sun god Helios (1865–67, plate 10). The ocean nymph Clytie, spurned by Helios, wears a crown of sunflower petals to signify her devotion as she turned constantly toward the sun.

Artists and poets were particularly sensitive to the sacramental essence of nature, which they insisted was accessible to all, if people only would open their eyes to it. Richards scorned the capitalist who only saw commercial promise in the beauties of the environment, even the majestic power of Niagara Falls:

> There are some who could forever stand upon some jutting rock o'er hanging the yawning abyss of Niagara's stupendous cataract, and hear nought in the unceasing roar, see nought in the endless current of its onrushing world of waters, nought in the giddy flow of its ever eddying whirlpools, nought in its ever ascending, thick, impenetrable veil of spray, rising toward heaven and its Omnipotent Creator, like the smoke and incense from Nature's mighty sacrificial Altar.—save the existence of gigantic mill pond, destined at some future time to move the thousand looms and spindles of some desecrating capitalist or to be harnessed, and shackled and chaffed under the hands of some ingenious Yankee![80]

Commercial exploitation of these natural wonders seemed like a desecration of a sacred gift from the creator. In his essay "Nature's Music," Richards quoted from both John Greenleaf Whittier's poem "Christ in the Tempest" and William Cullen Bryant's "Thanatopsis," which explicitly linked the forces of nature to the powers of God.[81]

WAVES, THE MUSIC OF THE SEA—DYNAMIC HIEROGLYPHS

Nature is never still, however; landscapes are shaped by active processes, changing all the time. Richards recognized and celebrated that dynamism, and the stubborn quest to capture this temporal element shaped his artistic practice, especially in the seascapes of his later years. He recognized this with a musical metaphor: "Nature is all music," Richards wrote in the early 1850s, "She is all music—for them the sighing winds and the raging storm, the bubbling spring and the high mountain stream, the murmuring brooks and the roaring Ocean's changing tides—each take up the burden of the Song, and bear it upward, upward to the throne of God."[82] Richards is well known for his eloquent depictions of waves crashing against rocks, or curling in translucent spray against the shore (plates 167–69, 172–75, 191–95). The surging waves and breakers at Newport,

Conanicut, and Cornwall evoke sound as well as visual drama.

The sea is a motif overflowing with meanings. Water is often taken as a symbol of purity, and the source of life. It is also the essence of the watercolor medium. Many of Richards's exquisite works of art were born from the merging of water, colors, and paper. The vastness of the ocean was a paradigmatic image of the Sublime, as defined in the eighteenth century, vast and untamable, dwarfing human consciousness and aspirations.

The modern science of geology in the nineteenth century added new dimensions with the recognition that the rocks of the shore were themselves once fluid, though now congealed into hardened sculptural shapes. Even Richards's mountain landscapes embody a new understanding of time. Mountains embody the deep time of geologic eras, born of molten magma and shaped by weather and glaciers. In the nineteenth century, the new discoveries of geology fascinated artists, poets, as well as scientists. John Ruskin was a member of the Geological Society of London. Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem *In Memoriam* (1849) described geological change paradoxically as a shifting spectacle of forms taking shape:

> The hills are shadows, and they flow
> From form to form, and nothing stands,
> They melt like mist, the solid lands,
> Like clouds they shape themselves and go.[83]

The recognition of constant change, whether in geology, politics, or evolution, was a key theme of emerging modernism.

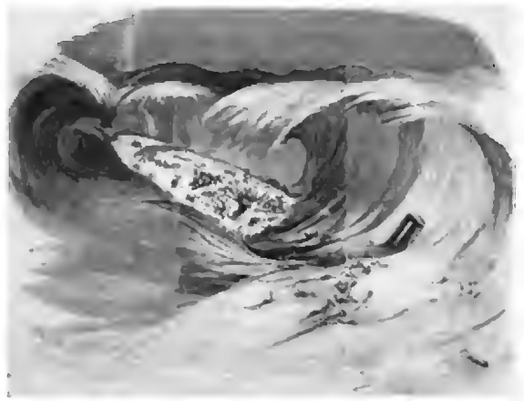
12. William Trost Richards, *Old Ocean's Gray and Melancholy Waste*, 1885. Oil on canvas, 40.8 x 72.3 in., Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, 1923.9.6.

Richards's seascapes are particularly interesting in this context. He obsessively depicted rocky coastlines with crashing surf. They are worn away by the ceaseless waves, uniting past and present, and the deep time of geology with the instantaneity of the surf. Simultaneously evoking stasis and change, the crashing waves on the shore can be taken as a symbol of the brevity of human life, and the permanence of the hope of faith. Linda S. Ferber has perceptively suggested that Richards's large seascape *Old Ocean's Gray and Melancholy Waste* was in part created as a response to the death of his friend and patron George Whitney in 1885 (fig. 12).[84] The title is taken from a line in William Cullen Bryant's poem "Thanatopsis," itself a meditation on mortality and nature. Although many of Richards's seascapes sparkle with sunlight, and his waves are translucent like stained

13. Francis Quarles, "Emblem XI," in *Emblems, Divine and Moral* (New York: Robert Carter, 1854).

glass, these waves are drained of light and the joy of life. More than many of his pictures, this painting expresses the sense of the Sublime, which was so important to earlier Romantic artists such as Thomas Cole or J. M. W. Turner. It evokes the impression of infinite nature transcending the comprehension and control of human understanding, appropriate for a memorial picture. Richards's seascape embodies the Sublime that Arthur Schopenhauer described when the recognition of the infinities of space and time overwhelm us: "Then we feel ourselves reduced to nothing, feel ourselves as individuals, as living bodies, a transient appearances of the will, like drops in the ocean, fading away, melting away into nothing."[85] Richards's painting shows no trace of ship or land, it is simply a nearly abstract view of the low horizon and rolling waves of the deep ocean.

Themes of mortality are found in the many paintings of shipwrecks from the nineteenth century. In a classic essay, Lorenz Eitner identified the image of a "storm-tossed

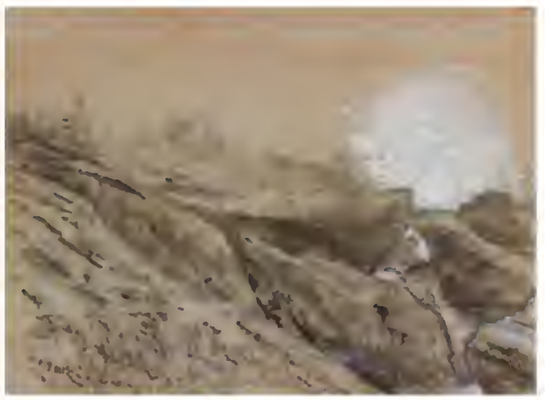


14. The wreck of the steamship Central America, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* 4, no. 96 (Oct. 3, 1857).

boat" to be one of the key themes of Romanticism, with its suggestion of the fragility of life in the face of natural forces.[86] The traditional trope of salvation received in the form of a rescue from a shipwreck was found in many emblem books, which were still being printed at mid-century. After forty-four editions since 1635, Francis Quarles's *Emblems, Divine and Moral* was reprinted in New York in 1854 (fig. 13).[87] The emblematic tradition was still vital, even for naturalists such as Henry David Thoreau, who owned a copy of Quarles's emblem book.[88]

Despite new technologies in the nineteenth century, the life of sailors was still fraught with peril. The sinking of the steamship Central America in September of 1857 made headlines across the US, and the loss of its cargo of gold rush treasure helped spark the nationwide financial panic of 1857. The rendering on the front page of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* was a sensationalist depiction of the last moments of the ship, overwhelmed with a giant curling wave (fig. 14). The stylization was extreme, but nonetheless evocative of the terrors of the sea.

One of the most famous images of a ship in peril is J. M. W. Turner's painting *The Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On)*, a fiery example of the danger of the sea matched by human cruelty. Intense color and a bold painterly style capture the turbulence and tragedy of the event. This picture, once owned by John Ruskin, was acclaimed by abolitionists and eventually purchased for Boston's Museum of Fine Arts.[89]



15. Winslow Homer (1836–1910), *Surf and Rock near Cannon Rock, Prouts Neck*, 1884. Charcoal and white chalk on paper, 17.2 x 23.3 in., Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, 1969.40.

Richards pursued the theme with his stunning but understated painting of a *Shipwreck* of 1872 (plate 175). This work is clearly set in the present moment. The broken mast of the capsized ship has washed ashore amid the crashing surf. The horizon is low, and the diagonal of the mast begins just inside the frame of the picture, creating a sense of immediacy. There is no sign of the crew, although the ship is aground near the shore, veiled by mists. Compared to the melodrama of Turner's *Slave Ship*, however, it is a quieter, more naturalistic meditation on nature and human ambitions. He often included signs of old shipwrecks in other paintings of the coastline, depicting the keel or ribs of a hull sticking up from the sand (plates 174–80).

The effort to capture evanescent breakers, with waves constantly rising and falling, changing at each instant, is one of the most difficult challenges for any artist, and one that Richards struggled with again and again. John Ruskin compared trying to paint the sea to "trying to paint a soul."[90] He reluctantly concluded that it was simply beyond human powers to capture a true picture of waves and surf—a challenge that Richards gladly took on.[91] Ruskin felt that any attempt to capture the ephemeral designs of foam could only destroy the desired effect.[92] The chaotic nature of the pounding curls and crashes of the surf represented a challenge to Ruskin's commitment to order and clarity: "There is in them an irreconcilable mixture of fury and formalism…the spray at the top is in a continual transition between forms projected by their own weight, and forms blown and carried off with their weight overcome. Then at last, when it has come down, who shall say what shape that may be called, which shape has none, of the great crash where it touches the beach? I think it is that last crash which is the great taskmaster. Nobody can do anything with it."[93]

To capture that last crash of the surf, some artists experimented with nearly abstract renderings to evoke the dynamic force of the sea. Winslow Homer juxtaposed bold scribbles of white against the solidity of the rocky coast at Prouts Neck to evoke the instantaneous vision (fig. 15). In this astonishing drawing, the white marks vividly capture the explosion of the spray, but abandon any pretense of detailed realism. In contrast, Richards maintained a scrupulous level of detail in his renderings of crashing waves except in rapid oil or watercolor sketches (plates 172, 187–88, 193).

Chaos and experiments in formlessness were anathema to Ruskin, who was famously sued by James McNeill Whistler in 1877 for his disparaging review of Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold, the Falling Rocket* (fig. 16). After seeing Whistler's boldly experimental painting at the Grosvenor Gallery in London, Ruskin accused the artist of "flinging a paint-pot in the face of the public." Whistler sued him for libel in a famous court case that was ultimately decided in the artist's favor.[94]

The fleeting bursts of fireworks in Whistler's painting are akin to the transitory nature of waves breaking on the shore. Waves simultaneously denote instantaneity and permanence in the recurring yet ever differing patterns—they are dynamic hieroglyphs, constantly in motion. Waves are predictable in general, but all individual waves are different.

The sea is an image corresponding to ideas of freedom and the sublime vastness of nature and God. The constant surging of powerful forces in the endless surf is also an

16. James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), *Nocturne in Black and Gold, the Falling Rocket*, 1875. Oil on panel, 23.7 x 18.3 in., Detroit Institute of Arts, 46.309.

17. Walter Crane (1845–1915), *Neptune's Horses*, 1892. Oil on canvas, 33.7 x 84.6 in., Neue Pinakothek, Munich, 13419.

analogue to the restless human brain and its emotions; a Romantic projection, to be sure, but compelling. In the end, each artist must dance to the rhythm of time and the cycles of the waves. Unlike Katsushika Hokusai's famous woodcut *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* (1831), which was so influential on artists of the second half of the century, Richards does not depict a singular wave, but the regular and eternal dynamics of the sea.[95]

18. Anna Richards (Brewster), illustration to A. M. (Anna Matlack) Richards, *Letter and Spirit: Dramatic Sonnets of Inward Life* (London: George Allen, 1898), VIII.

Richards's son Theodore described the intense concentration of his father while trying to sketch the breaking waves: "He stood for hours in the early days of Atlantic City or Cape May, with folded arms, studying the motion of the sea,—until people thought him insane. After days of gazing, he made pencil notes of the action of the water. He even stood for hours in a bathing suit among the waves, trying to analyse the motion."[96] Richards was on a quest to capture the true appearance and structure of the waves. In 1876 Richards wrote from Newport: "The early part of last week we had another tremendous surf, of which I got some record. But it is a little too much for me, perhaps for anybody for I do not remember any picture which gives any idea of the awful power of the breaking of a big wave against the rocks, much less of the tumult of the back action as it meets the incoming wave."[97] In *Seascape* (1896, plate 195), and many other paintings, Richards succeeded brilliantly in capturing the power and beauty of the rolling waves and crashing surf. His attention to light effects is extraordinary, with a radiant sunrise suffusing the clouds with delicate color. The light shining through the translucent curling waves creates an effect not unlike stained glass.

Richards sought to capture the drama of the ocean on the coast of Britain as well as in America. He described his strenuous efforts to sketch the surf in Dorset, racing into and away from the crashing waves: "I watch and watch it, try to disentangle its push and leap and recoil, make myself ready to catch the tricks of the big breakers and am always startled out of my self possession by the thunder and the rush, jump backward up the loose shingle of the beach, sure this time I will be washed away; get soaked with spray, and am ashamed that I had missed getting the real drawing of such a splendid one, and this happens 20 times in an hour and I have never yet got used to it."[98] Like a nautical Sisyphus, Richards was consumed with the endless task of trying to capture the evanescent arc of the waves, which continually form and collapse on the shore. He used a cigar box to hold the boards for his oil sketches and painting materials to sketch near the breaking surf.[99] Richards also consulted photographs to study waves; several letters discuss photographs he had seen, and by 1891 he had his own camera.[100]

Richards sought the unique, individual forms of breaking waves; he remained a steadfast realist in the context of impressionists and symbolists, such as the British artist Walter Crane, who created a mythical image of *Neptune's Horses* in 1892 (fig. 17). Crane's image plays off the verbal pun of seahorses, and builds on the propensity of humans to find shapes in waves, clouds, and other random phenomena. Modernity took many forms in the late nineteenth century, some of them dramatically opposed to others. Crane imposed his charming symbolic vision on nature, while Richards sought tirelessly to capture its true aspect.

In 1898, Richards's daughter modified one of her father's typical seascapes to illustrate her mother's volume of devotional verses, *Letter and Spirit: Dramatic Sonnets of Inward Life* (fig. 18). Realism is here combined with Pre-Raphaelite medievalism in the symbolic border designs. The rising sun is a clear sign of resurrection: "The sun has risen beyond the wide gray beach / From the fair depths of morning comes a thrill / Of hope and courage, and a firmer will / The narrow way of a higher life to reach."

The vastness of the sea was evocative of cosmic themes and spiritual transcendence, but its impersonality could also seem hostile and mournful. Describing a storm in Newport in 1876, he wrote: "All the saddest and wildest noises of nature are reproduced by the surf....But above all noises could be heard the hiss of the swift breaker,—as it came white and malignant—seeming to know its own fierceness—and, bursting in the cataracts on the rocks was followed by another and another fiercer and heavier; till it was a relief to

19. Thomas Eakins (1844–1916), *Motion Study: George Reynolds Nude, Pole-Vaulting to Left*, 1885. Gelatin silver print, 3.9 x 4.6 in., Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, 1985.68.2.996.

turn away to the stillness of the town, and try to render coherent the tremendous impressions."[101] The graphic signs that Richards used to depict the instantaneous vision of the breaking waves also evoke the sounds of the sea, a synaesthetic effect based on correspondences between the pictorial forms and music.

Wordsworth and William Cullen Bryant also used music as a metaphor for the eternally changing rhythms of nature. Whistler, of course, is most famous for exploring the parallel of music and painting with his nocturnes, which embody the dictum of Walter Pater that "all art constantly aspires to the condition of music."[102] Musicians were also inspired by the ocean rhythms. Claude Debussy's *La mer, trois esquisses symphoniques pour orchestra (The Sea, Three Symphonic Sketches for Orchestra)* premiered in 1905, a modernist evocation of the music of the sea. Synesthesia, the evocation of one sense by another, leading to a unity of music and vision, was grounded in the theory of correspondences and physiology. It was a key goal of many European Romantic and symbolist musicians and artists.[103]

Studies of waves, motion, and sound parallel the studies of movement in time and space pioneered by the chronophotography of Eadweard Muybridge and Thomas Eakins (fig. 19). They also anticipate the fascination with cinematic effects of the later Italian futurists, such as Gino Severini's painting *The Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin* (fig. 20). The interpenetration of planes of space, and the simultaneous evocation of dance, music, and the fusion of the external world of the cabaret with the consciousness of the artist may owe something to spiritualism as well as cubism.[104]

20. Gino Severini (1883–1966), *The Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin*, 1912. Oil on canvas with sequins, 63.6 x 61.5 in., Museum of Modern Art, New York, 288.1949.

In the next century, the first American book of film criticism, *The Art of Moving Pictures* (1915) by Vachel Lindsay, devoted a chapter to the hieroglyphic model of image-making, put into motion in silent films.[105] Later, filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein would model his theory of montage on hieroglyphs, arguing that the juxtaposition of cuts in cinema was akin to the combination of pictorial images in hieroglyphs.[106] Although cinema incorporates words, it is primarily a visual sign system. Eisenstein's montage extended the temporal element, emphasizing simultaneity as well as sequence. While more conceptual, his modernism was rooted in the earlier nineteenth-century explorations of space and time in which Richards participated.

Richards's preoccupation with wave motion and rhythms of nature and fluid dynamics mark his position at the end of a great century of scientific progress, and on the cusp of new modernist sensibilities. The new science embraced instability and flux; Henri Bergson pointed out that in wave patterns "there is no form, since form is immobile and the reality is movement. What is real is the continual *change of* form: *form is only a snapshot view of a transition.*"[107] The mountains and seascapes depicted by Richards through the decades reflect his search for something permanent in the face of this eternal flux.

The music of the sea is rhythmic, unceasing, evocative of power, but also of sadness. Richards's long struggle to capture the breakers is a fitting metaphor for the quest of an artist seeking to capture life's fleeting moments. The quest to balance eternal values and transitory phenomena is paralleled in the tension between artistic fashion and tradition that every artist must reconcile. William Trost Richards's seascapes were truly dynamic hieroglyphs, the culmination of his lifelong quest to capture the beauty and deeper meaning of nature, time, and life.

1 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (1836) (Boston: James Munroe, 1849), 2.
2 Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1854), 329–30.
3 See "Introduction," note 98 in this volume.
4 Asher B. Durand, "Letters on Landscape Painting" (letter 8), *Crayon* 1, no. 23 (June 6, 1855): 354–55.
5 Neil Harris, *The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years, 1790–1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 136.
6 John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 5 vols. (London: Smith, Elder, 1857), 1:lxix (section heading).
7 Psalm 19:1 (AV).
8 E. L. Magoon, "Scenery and Mind," in *The Home Book of the Picturesque, or American Scenery, Art and Literature* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1852), 5. For Magoon and Richards, see Linda S. Ferber, "The Power of Patronage: William Trost Richards and the American Watercolor Movement," in *Masters of Color and Light: Homer, Sargent, and the American Watercolor Movement*, Linda S. Ferber and Barbara Dayer Gallati (Washington, DC: Brooklyn Museum of Art in association with Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), 69–91. Also, Kevin J. Avery and Claire A. Conway, "The Reverend E. L. Magoon and the American Drawings Collection," *Antiques* 157, no. 1 (Jan. 2000): 212–17, and Clare A. Conway, "The 'William Trost Richards Gallery' in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, c. 1870–1929: Its Development, Display, and Disposal" (master's thesis, Hunter College, City University of New York, 2000). Magoon was ordained at the Newton Theological Institution (later the Andover Newton Theological School) in 1839.
9 Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery," *American Monthly Magazine*, n.s., 1 (Jan. 1836): 1–12; reprinted in *American Art, 1700–1960: Sources and Documents*, ed. John McCoubrey (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 109.
10 Cole, 100.
11 Cole, 109.
12 Nicolai Cikovsky Jr., "'The Ravages of the Axe': The Meaning of the Tree Stump in Nineteenth-Century American Art," *Art Bulletin* 61, no. 4 (Dec. 1979): 611–26. See also Barbara Novak, "The Double-Edged Axe," *Art in America* 64, no. 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1976): 44–50.
13 Karl Kusserow and Alan C. Braddock, eds., *Nature's Nation: American Art and*

Environment (Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum and Yale University Press, 2018).

14 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journey to America*, trans. George Lawrence, ed. J. P. Mayer (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1971), 399. Quoted in Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825–1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 147.

15 George W. Sheldon, *American Painters* (New York: D. Appleton, 1879), 65.

16 Henry David Thoreau, *The Maine Woods* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1864), 71. Italics in the original text.

17 James Schlett, *A Not Too Greatly Changed Eden: The Story of the Philosophers' Camp in the Adirondacks* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015). So enthusiastic was the group after this sojourn that they joined together to form the Adirondack Club, and purchased 22,500 acres of land near Ampersand Pond for $455.87, the amount of unpaid taxes. Although they built a rough clubhouse, the events of the Civil War put an end to their club, and the land reverted to private ownership. It was purchased by a conservation group in 2008. Martin Espinoza, "Conservancy Buys Slice of Adirondacks," *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/19/nyregion/19adirondacks.html.

18 William James Stillman, "The Philosophers' Camp: Emerson, Agassiz, Lowell, and Others in the Adirondacks," *Century Magazine* 46, no. 4 (Aug. 1893): 599.

19 Karen L. Georgi, "Summer Camp with William J. Stillman: Looking at Nature, between Ruskin and Emerson," *American Art* 32, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 22–41.

20 W. Barksdale Maynard, "'An Ideal Life in the Woods for Boys': Architecture and Culture in the Earliest Summer Camps," *Winterthur Portfolio* 34, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 3–29.

21 George F. Drinka, *The Birth of Neurosis: Myth, Malady, and the Victorians* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 184–97.

22 WTR, "Flowers," Oct. 1, 1850, manuscript. William Trost Richards Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC (hereafter WTR Papers, AAA, searchable online at https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/william-trost-richards-papers-5663).

23 WTR, "The Spirit of Toil," Sept. 30, 1852, manuscript. WTR Papers, AAA.

24 Magoon, "Scenery and Mind," 5.

25 Magoon, 6.

26 Quoted in Linda S. Ferber, *William Trost Richards: American Landscape and Marine Painter, 1833–1905* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1973), 32.

27 William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798," in *Lyrical Ballads* (London: J. and A. Arch, 1798). See J. Robert Barth, SJ, *Romanticism and Transcendence: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the Religious* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003).

28 William James Stillman, "Thoughts on Artistic Education in Relation to Individual Development," *Crayon* 4, no. 5 (May 1857): 132.

29 WTR, "Sunlight," in *Humbly Dedicated to Marie*, 1850–51, manuscript, 1–9. WTR Papers, AAA.

30 Novak, *Nature and Culture*, 272.

31 WTR to Hannah Whitall Smith, 1866. WTR Papers, AAA. Smith was from a prominent Quaker family and leader of the Higher Life Movement.

32 Emerson, *Nature*, 25.

33 Emerson, 8.

34 WTR to James Mitchell, Oct. 2, 1853, 396. WTR Papers, AAA.

35 Asher B. Durand, "Letters on Landscape Painting" (letter 4), *Crayon* 1, no. 7 (Feb. 14, 1855): 98.

36 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3:93.

37 John Ruskin, quoted in "The Office of Imagination," *New Path* 1, no. 7 (Nov. 1863): 78.

38 Durand, "Letters on Landscape Painting" (letter 8), 354.

39 Durand, 355.

40 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 1:xxv (introduction): "Every landscape painter should know the specific characters of every object he has to represent, rock, flower, or cloud; and in his highest ideal works all their distinctions will be perfectly expressed, broadly or delicately, slightly or completely, according to the nature of the subject, and the degree of attention which is to be drawn to the particular object by the part it plays in the composition."

41 John Ruskin, *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1851) (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1891), 89–91.

42 W. J. T. Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape," in *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 5.

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44 Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, "Semiotics and Art History," *Art Bulletin* 73, no. 2 (June 1991): 174–208.

45 See Erik Iversen, "Hieroglyphic Studies of the Renaissance," *Burlington Magazine* 100, no. 658 (Jan. 1958): 15–21 and his *The Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad, 1961).

46 Athanasius Kircher, SJ, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, 3 vols. (Rome: V. Mascardi, 1652–54).

47 Jean-François Champollion, *Précis du système hiéroglyphique des anciens Égyptiens, ou, Recherches sur les élémens premiers de cette écriture sacrée, sur leurs diverses combinaisons, et sur les rapports de ce système avec les autres méthodes graphiques égyptiennes. Revue par l'auteur et augmentée de la Lettre à M. Dacier, relative à l'alphabet des hiéroglyphes phonétiques employés par les Egyptiens sur leurs monumens de l'époque grecque et de l'époque romaine*, 2 ed. (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1828).

48 Alison Flood, "YOLO Juliet. Srsly Hamlet. Macbeth #killingit. Shakespeare Goes Textspeak," *Guardian*, June 12, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/jun/12/omg-shakespeare-penguin-random-house-yolo-juliet-srsly-hamlet-textspeak.

49 Henry Morton, Charles R. Hale, and Samuel Huntington Jones, *Report of the Committee Appointed by the Philomathean Society of the University of Pennsylvania to Translate the Inscription on the Rosetta Stone* (Philadelphia: S. N. Rosenthal, 1859), reviewed in *Crayon* 6, no. 6 (June 1859): 186–89.

50 Irwin, *American Hieroglyphics*, 11.

51 Emerson, *Nature*, 2.

52 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet" (1841), in *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 12 vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1903–4), 3:13.

53 Wilhelm Wackenroder and Ludwig Tieck, *Outpourings of an Art-Loving Friar* (1797), trans. Edward Monrin (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1975), 61.

54 John Stuart Blackie, *The Wisdom of Goethe* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1883), 182.

55 Magoon, "Scenery and Mind," 3.

56 Thomas Starr King, *The White Hills: Their Legends, Landscape, and Poetry* (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, Lee, 1860), 394. King's quote was cited in *Swedenborgian: A New-Church Monthly Magazine* 4, no. 4 (Apr. 1860): 285. King first served as minister in

Charlestown and Boston, and later in San Francisco. He was an advocate for making Yosemite a national park, and peaks in Yosemite and New Hampshire are named Mount Starr King for him.

57 Robert L. McGrath, *Gods in Granite: The Art of the White Mountains of New Hampshire* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), xxii.

58 Henry Ward Beecher, *Sermons*, vol 1. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1869), 223–24.

59 Thoreau, *Walden*, 548.

60 John La Farge, "On Painting," *New England Magazine* 38 (Apr. 1908): 230.

61 See Eugène Delacroix, *Journal*, trans. Walter Pach (New York: Viking, 1972), 336.

62 Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, vol. 4 (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, 1851–57).

63 Emerson, *Nature*, 37–38: "Because of this radical correspondence between visible things and human thoughts, savages, who have only what is necessary, converse in figures. As we go back in history, language becomes more picturesque, until its infancy, when it is all poetry; or all spiritual facts are represented by natural symbols. The same symbols are found to make the original elements of all languages....This immediate dependence of language upon nature, this conversion of an outward phenomenon into a type of somewhat in human life, never loses its power to affect us."

64 "The Sphinx" by Emerson was published in 1841 in the magazine the *Dial*, and reprinted in Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Poems* (Boston: James Munroe, 1847), 7: "The Sphinx is drowsy, / Her wings are furled: / Her ear is heavy, / She broods on the world. / 'Who'll tell me my secret, / The ages have kept?'"

65 Emerson, *Nature*, 60.

66 Thomas L. Sloan, "Paul Gauguin's *D'où venons nous? Que sommes nous? Où allons nous?*: A Symbolist Philosophical Leitmotif," *Arts Magazine* 53, no. 5 (Jan. 1979): 104–9.

67 Emanuel Swedenborg, *Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell: From Things Heard and Seen* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1974), 53.

68 See Alan C. Braddock, "The Order of Things," in Kusserow and Braddock, *Nature's Nation*, 43–69. The classic study is Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study in the History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936).

69 Anna Balakian, "Swedenborg and the Romanticists," in *The Symbolist Movement: A Critical Appraisal* (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 12–28.

70 Richard Silver, "Spirit in American Art: The Image as Hieroglyph," in *Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision*, ed. Robin Larsen, Stephen Larsen, James F. Lawrence, and William Ross Woofenden (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1988), 63–72.

71 Emerson, *Nature*, 8.

72 Emerson, 41.

73 Robert L. McGrath, "The Tree and the Stump: Hieroglyphics of the Sacred Forest," *Journal of Forest History* 33, no. 2 (Apr. 1989): 64.

74 Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (Brooklyn: Walt Whitman, 1855), 16: "A child said, What is the grass? fetching it to me with full hands; / How could I answer the child?....I do not know what it is, any more than he. // Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic."

75 William James Stillman, *The Autobiography of a Journalist*, vol. 1 (London: Grant Richards, 1901), 82–83.

76 Janice Simon, "*The Crayon*, 1855–1861: The Voice of Nature in Criticism, Poetry, and the Fine Arts" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1990): "Like Transcendentalism which it admired to a degree, the New Church regarded the transformation to come as personal in nature, an influx of a beneficent God and His altruistic love into the individual soul. Spiritism, mesmerism, and utopianism all played a role in the doctrines of the New Church in England and America."

77 WTR to Anna Matlack, Jan. 31, 1856, Florence. Quoted in Linda S. Ferber, *William Trost Richards (1833–1905): American Landscape and Marine Painter* (New York: Garland, 1980), 87.

78 Charles Colbert, "Spiritual Current and Manifest Destiny in the Art of Hiram Powers," *Art Bulletin* 82, no. 3 (Sept. 2000): 531–32.

79 WTR to James Mitchell, Dec. 7, 1855, Florence. Quoted in Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 87.

80 Ferber, 87.

81 Richards, "Nature's Music," in *Humbly Dedicated to Marie*, 12–14.

82 Richards, 12–14.

83 Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam* (London: Blackie and Son, 1849), canto 123.

84 Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 359.

85 Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, ed. Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 230.

86 Lorenz Eitner, "The Open Window and the Storm-Tossed Boat: An Essay in the Iconography of Romanticism," *Art Bulletin* 37, no. 4 (Dec. 1955): 281–90. See also David C. Miller, "The Iconology of Wrecked or Stranded Boats in Mid to Late Nineteenth-Century American Culture," in *American Iconology: New Approaches to Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 186–208.

87 J. Gray Sweeney, "The Nude of Landscape Painting: Emblematic Personification in the Art of the Hudson River School," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 3, no. 4 (Fall 1989): 42–65.

88 Thoreau owned a copy of the 1825 edition of Quarles's book; see *The Correspondence of Henry D. Thoreau: Volume 1, 1834–1848*, ed. Robert N. Hudspeth (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 235.

89 Nancy Scott, "America's First Public Turner: How Ruskin Sold *The Slave Ship* to New York," *British Art Journal* 10, no. 3 (Winter/Spring 2009/10): 69–77.

90 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 1:320: "Of all inorganic substances water is the most wonderful...what shall we compare to this mighty, this universal element, for glory and for beauty? or how shall we follow its eternal changefulness of feeling? It is like trying to paint a soul."

91 Ruskin, 1:321: "But to paint the actual play of hue on the reflective surface, or to give the forms and fury of water when it begins to show itself; to give the flashing and rocket-like velocity of a noble cataract, or the precision and grace of the sea wave, so exquisitely modelled, though so mockingly transient, so mountainous in its form, yet so cloud-like in its motion, with its variety and delicacy of colour, when every ripple and wreath has some peculiar passage of reflection upon itself alone, and the radiating and scintillating sunbeams are mixed with the dim hues of transparent depth and dark rock below; to do this perfectly is beyond the power of man; to do it even partially has been granted to but one or two, even of those few who have dared to attempt it."

92 Ruskin, 1:367–68: "The lapping and curdling foam is difficult enough to catch, even when the lines of its undulation alone are considered; but the lips, so to speak, which lie along these lines, are full, projecting, and marked by beautiful light and shade; each has its high light, a gradation into shadow of indescribable delicacy, a bright reflected light, and a dark cast shadow: to draw all this requires labour and care, and firmness of work, which, as I imagine, must always, however skilfully bestowed, destroy all impressions of wildness, accidentalism, and evanescence, and so kill the sea."

93 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 1:369.

94 Linda Merrill, *A Pot of Paint: Aesthetics on Trial in "Whistler v. Ruskin"* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992). See James McNeill Whistler, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* (New York: Frederick Stokes and Brothers, 1890) for an entertaining and possibly accurate account of the trial.

95 There is a tantalizing hint of Richards's interest in Japanese art in a letter to his daughter Eleanor Richards Price in the early 1880s. He remarks on the craze for the play *The Mikado* that had recently swept Boston, and suggested that they collaborate on some commercial designs inspired by Japanese fans. WTR to Eleanor Richards Price, early 1880s, Cambridge. WTR Papers, AAA.

96 Harrison S. Morris, *Masterpieces of the Sea: William T. Richards; A Brief Outline of His Life and Art* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1912), 10.

97 WTR to George Whitney, Aug. 20, 1876, Newport. Quoted in Ferber, *William Trost Richards*, 368.

98 WTR to George Whitney, July 14, 1879, Wyke Regis. Quoted in Ferber, 368.

99 Ferber, 369: "Richards had made an oil sketch box, a thumb box he called it, from a flat cigar box, and he told us with great enthusiasm how handy it was to sketch near the surf. According to Richards's granddaughter, he had three such sketch boxes in different sizes and had boards cut to fit them. These slipped into the slotted lid which served as an easel."

100 Linda S. Ferber writes of Richards's use of photographs to study waves: "In 1883, Whitney sent him some photographs taken at Atlantic City and elsewhere 'in which I think you will be interested, as to the waves.' Two years later, Richards wrote from Cambridge to his old friend Willcox: 'I have here some photographs of seas and other views belonging to you.' By 1891, Richards was using a camera himself to supplement sketches on his Irish tour." Ferber, 369.

101 WTR to George Whitney, Sept. 24, 1876, Newport. Quoted in Ferber, 368.

102 Walter Pater's famous quote is from "The School of Giorgione," which was published in the *Fortnightly Review* in October 1877 and added to *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, 3rd. ed. (London: Macmillan, 1888). See *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry; The 1893 Text*, ed. Donald L. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 106.

103 French writers Charles Baudelaire and Joris-Karl Huysmans explored extreme cases of synesthesia; it was central to Richard Wagner's concept of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art), and was invoked in the music and paintings of the Lithuanian Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875–1911), notably his *Sonata of the Sea* (1908).

104 See Marianne W. Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1900–1915* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 53n1.

105 Vachel Lindsay, "Hieroglyphics," in *The Art of Moving Pictures* (1915) (New York: Macmillan, 1922), 171–88.

106 Vjačeslav Vsevolodovič Ivanov, "Eisenstein's Montage of Hieroglyphic Signs," in *On Signs*, ed. Marshall Blonsky (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 221–35.

107 Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (1911), trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Modern Library, 1944), 328. Italics in the original text.

PLATES

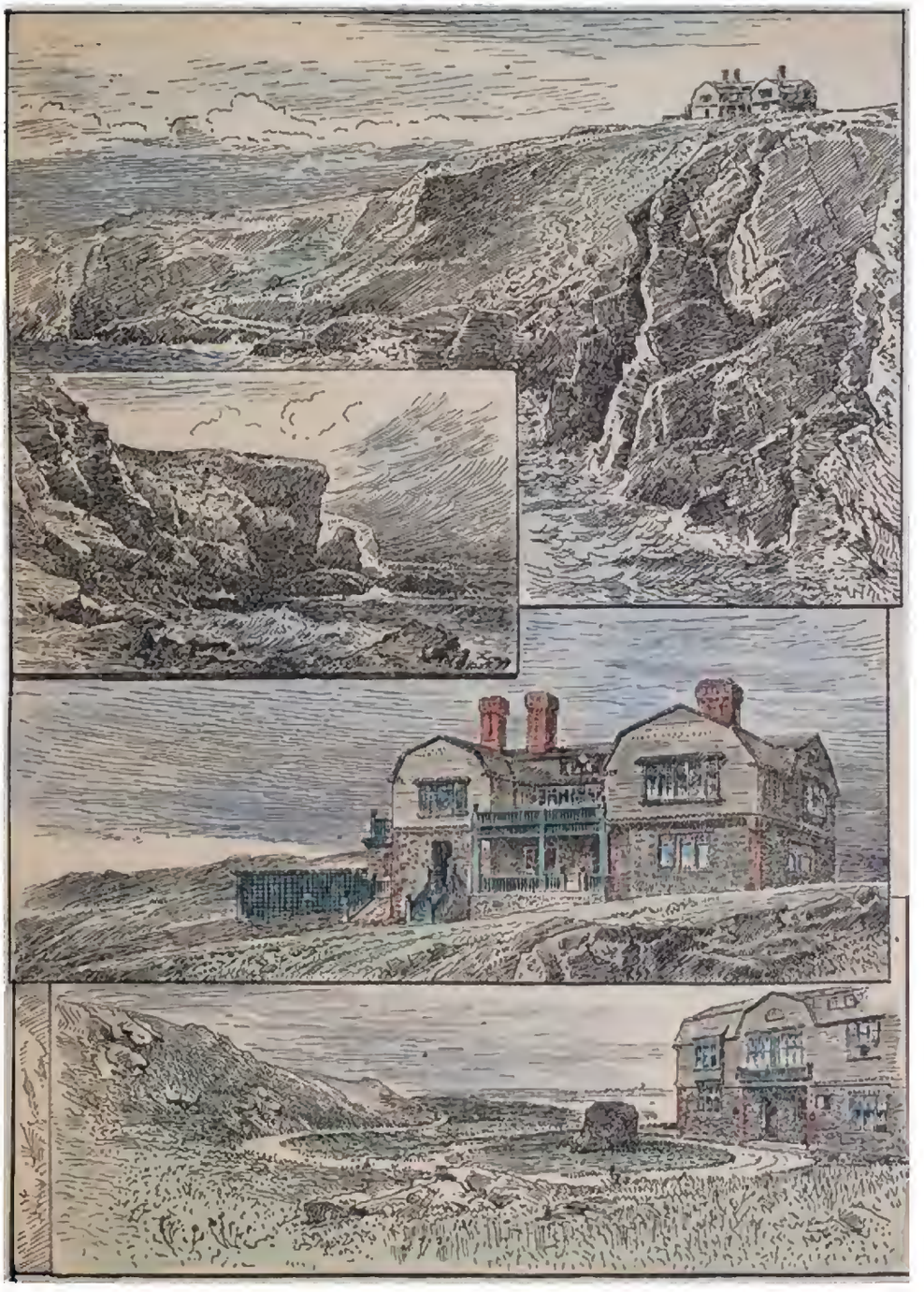
All works are by William Trost Richards (1833–1905) unless otherwise indicated and appear courtesy of their lenders. Photographs have been provided by lenders, Gary Wayne Gilbert, Jeffery Howe, Christopher Soldt, and William Vareika Fine Arts with these additional acknowledgments: Art Resource (plate 135), Eric W. Baumgartner (plate 25), Menconi + Schoelkopf (plate 173), Jack Ramsay (plates 137, 174, 176, 179), and Peter Siegel (plate 26).

1. Anna Richards Brewster (1870–1952) and William Trost Richards,
Portrait of W. T. Richards in His Studio at Graycliff, 1891
oil on canvas, 24 x 16 in.
private collection, courtesy William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

2. Edith Ballinger Price (1897–1997), *Interior, 7 Arnold Ave., Newport*, n.d.
watercolor on paper, 7.3 x 5.8 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

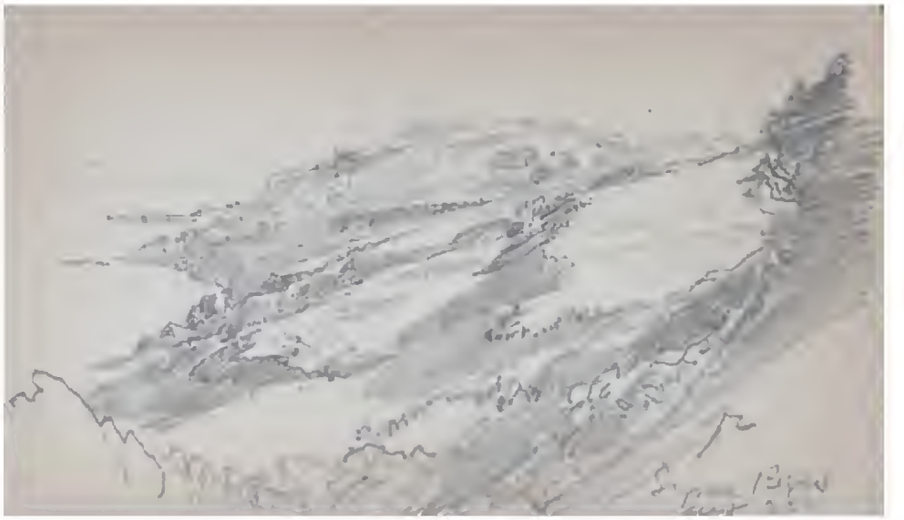
3. Anna Richards Brewster (1870–1952), *Billy's First Christmas Tree, Oldmixon Farm, Christmas 1886*, 1886
oil on with glass flecks on board, 15 x 21 in.
private collection

4. Anna Richards Brewster (1870–1952), *W. T. Richards Painting at the Beach, Matunuck, Rhode Island*, 1904
oil on board, 5.3 x 9.3 in.
private collection



5. After William Trost Richards, *Views of Graycliff*, 1880s
reproduction of drawing with watercolor wash on paper, 7 x 5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

6. Page from sketchbook of European travels, 1867 (70 pages)
pencil on paper, 4.4 x 5.8 in.
private collection, courtesy William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport



7. *Lyme Regis* from sketchbook of European travels, 1879 (138 pages)
pencil on paper, 3.8 x 6.4 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

8. *An Outdoor Studio*, early 1860s
pencil on paper, 4.6 x 3.6 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

9. Thomas Cole (1801–48), *The Tempter*, 1843
oil on canvas, 51 x 40 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College
from Alexandria & Michael N. Altman P'22

10. Hiram Powers (1805–73), *Clytie*, 1865–67
marble, 25.8 in. (h)
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College
from Alexandria & Michael N. Altman P'22

11. William James Stillman (1828–1901), *Study on Upper Saranac Lake*, 1854
oil on canvas, 30.5 x 25.5 in.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Dr. J. Sydney Stillman, 1977.842

12. William Stanley Haseltine (1835–1900), *Coast near Rome*, n.d.
oil on canvas, 25.4 x 72.9 in.
McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, Gift of Alexandria & Michael N. Altman P'22, 2019.2

13. *Landscape with Figures*, May 21, 1853
pencil on paper, 6.3 x 6.8 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

14. *Landscape with Mill Building*, June 9, 1853
pencil on paper, 5.5 x 9 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

15. *Landscape*, n.d.
pencil on paper, 10.8 x 14.9 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

16. *Catskill Clove*, August 19, 1853
pencil on paper, 5.4 x 9.3 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

17. *Trees and Rocks*, n.d.
pencil on paper, 5.3 x 8.5 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

18. *Catskill River*, August 11, 1853
pencil on paper, 6.5 x 9.3 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

19. *Schroon River*, July 5, 1855
pencil on paper, 5.8 x 11.8 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

20. *Lake George*, June 24, 1855
pencil on paper, 7 x 11.9 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

21. *Plains of North Elba*, July 2, 1855
pencil on paper, 4.1 x 12.3 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

22. *Mt. Vernon, Virginia*, 1854
graphite pencil on paper, 11.3 x 16.3 in.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Maxim Karolik for the M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Watercolors and Drawings, 60.1057

23. *Recruiting Station (Bethlehem)*, by 1862
oil on canvas, 12.6 x 20 in.
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Kesler, 1975.20.8

24. *Nantucket Shore*, 1865
oil on panel, 11 x 20 in.
Nantucket Historical Association, Gift of the Friends of the Nantucket Historical Association, 2019.0008.001

25. *Flora*, 1859
oil on mahogany panel, 7.4 x 5.3 in.
Collection of the Feld Trust

26. *In the Woods*, 1860
oil on canvas, 16 x 20.1 in.
Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Gift of Miss Mary T. Mason and Miss Jane Mason, 1955.10

27. *Plant Study*, n.d.
pencil on paper, 5 x 2.6 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College
from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

28. *Plant Study, Bethlehem,* August 23, 1861
pencil on paper, 8.6 x 5.9 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College
from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

29. *Plant Study*, n.d.
pencil on paper, 9 x 11.6 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

30. *Plant Studies,* May 23, 1865
pencil on paper, 6 x 9.4 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

31. *Edge of the Forest with Bridge over Stream*, n.d.
pencil on paper, 11.5 x 17 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

32. *Pennsylvania Landscape*, n.d.
oil on canvas, 27.4 x 41.5 in.
private collection

33. *Near Florence*, October 4, 1855
pencil on paper, 6.1 x 11.9 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

34. *Florence*, March 9, 1856
pencil on paper, 6.1 x 11.1 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

35. *Alpine Village, Germany*, n.d.
pencil and chalk on paper, 5.3 x 7.5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

36. *Near Auerbach*, June 23, 1864
pencil on paper, 8.8 x 11.9 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

37. *Heidelberg, Germany*, July 2, 1867
pencil on paper, 8.7 x 11.3 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

38. *Horgon, Lake Zurich*, September 3, 1855
pencil on paper, 4.6 x 11.3 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

39. *Lake Zug, Switzerland*, September 4, 1855
pencil on paper, 6.6 x 10.1 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

40. *Lake Lucerne*, September 9, 1855
pencil on paper, 4.8 x 10.9 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

41. *The Devil's Bridge, Switzerland*, September 1855
pencil on paper, 5.4 x 7.9 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

42. *Mountain Landscape with Figures*, August 19, 1867
pencil on paper, 9.8 x 12 in.
McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, Gift of William '74 & Alison Vareika P'09, '15, 2004.15

43. *St. Ives, Cornwall,* 1878
oil on board, 9.6 x 15.6 in.
private collection

44. *The Cornish Lions, Cornwall,* n.d.
pencil and watercolor on paper, 8.3 x 14 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

45. *The Cornish Lions, Cornwall*, n.d.
watercolor, pencil, and gouache on paper, 6.3 x 5.5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

46. *Land's End*, September 1, 1878
pencil on paper, 10 x 14.4 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

47. *English Coast*, n.d.
oil on board, 8.8 x 16 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

48. *Saint Michael's Mount, Cornwall*, n.d.
watercolor and pencil on paper, 5.3 x 8.3 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

49. *Isle of Skye*, 1904
oil on canvas, 40 x 68 in.
private collection

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50. *Harvesting Seaweed on Second Beach, Newport*, 1875, watercolor on paper, 3 x 4.6 in., 2008.5.3
51. *On the Cliff, Looking Inland, Newport*, 1876, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.1 x 4.4 in., 2008.5.15
52. *Morning at Rough Point, Newport*, 1876, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.4 x 5 in., 2008.5.19
53. *Study of a Drawing I Mean to Make*, 1876, watercolor and ink on paper, 3.1 x 4.4 in., 2008.5.11
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Dorrance H. Hamilton in memory of Samuel M. V. Hamilton

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54. *A Sketch: Paradise, Newport*, 1876, watercolor on paper, 3 x 4.5 in., 2008.5.6
55. *Afternoon Fog Coming In*, 1876, watercolor on paper, 3.1 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.10
56. *Off Newport*, 1875, watercolor on paper, 3.1 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.2
57. *Conanicut Island*, 1876, watercolor and graphite on paper, 3 x 4.5 in., 2008.5.13
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Dorrance H. Hamilton in memory of Samuel M. V. Hamilton

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58. *Old House on Conanicut Island*, 1876, watercolor on paper, 3 x 4.6 in., 2008.5.16
59. *High Hill, Conanicut Island*, 1877, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.3 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.17
60. *Near Beverly, Massachusetts*, 1877, watercolor on paper, 3.6 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.20
61. *Old Grave Yard at Newport*, 1875, watercolor on paper, c. 2.9 x 4.5 in., 2008.5.5
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Dorrance H. Hamilton in memory of Samuel M. V. Hamilton

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62. *Portsmouth Grove, near Newport*, 1876, watercolor on paper, 3 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.14
63. *An Essay at Twilight, Newport*, 1877, watercolor and ink on paper, 3.3 x 5 in., 2008.5.22
64. *A "Nocturne," Newport*, 1877, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.2 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.23
65. *Conanicut Island*, 1877, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, c. 3.4 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.25
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Dorrance H. Hamilton in memory of Samuel M. V. Hamilton

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66. *Our Afternoon at Conanicut*, 1877, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, c. 3.5 x 5 in., 2008.5.29
67. *Trebarwith Strand near Tintagel Castle, Cornwall*, 1878, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.2 x 4.8 in., 2008.5.35
68. *Kynance Cove, Cornwall*, 1878, watercolor on paper, 3 x 4.8 in., 2008.5.32
69. *Mounts Bay*, 1879, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.1 x 4.8 in., 2008.5.40
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Dorrance H. Hamilton in memory of Samuel M. V. Hamilton

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70. *The Cornish Lions, Cornwall*, 1878, watercolor on paper, 3.1 x 4.8 in., 2008.5.33
71. *Stonehenge*, 1879, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.1 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.36
72. *Old Gateway at Manor House, Poxwell, near Weymouth*, 1879, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, c. 3.1 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.46
73. *Stoke Poges, England*, 1880, watercolor on paper, c. 3.1 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.60
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Dorrance H. Hamilton in memory of Samuel M. V. Hamilton

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74. *The Thames, London*, 1879, watercolor on paper, 3.1 x 5 in., 2008.5.51
75. *The Thames, London*, 1879, watercolor on paper, 3.1 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.52
76. *Mill Bay, Land's End, Cornwall*, 1880, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.3 x 5 in., 2008.5.54
77. *The Tower, London*, 1880, watercolor and graphite on paper, c. 3.1 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.56
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Dorrance H. Hamilton in memory of Samuel M. V. Hamilton

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78. *Landseer's Lions, Trafalgar Square, London*, 1879, watercolor on paper, 3.2 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.49
79. *Richmond Hill, London*, 1880, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.3 x 5 in., 2008.5.59
80. *Windsor, London*, 1880, watercolor on paper, 3.3 x 5 in., 2008.5.58
81. *Greenwich, London*, 1880, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.2 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.53
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Dorrance H. Hamilton in memory of Samuel M. V. Hamilton

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82. *Bushy Park, near London*, 1879, watercolor on paper, 3.2 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.503
83. *York Minster*, 1880, watercolor on paper, 3.2 x 5 in., 2008.5.62
84. *Yarmouth, Isle of Wight*, 1880, watercolor on paper, 3.3 x 5.1 in., 2008.5.61
85. *W. T. Richards's House on Conanicut Island*, 1882, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.3 x 5 in., 2008.5.70
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Dorrance H. Hamilton in memory of Samuel M. V. Hamilton

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86. *My Cliffs on Conanicut Island*, 1881, watercolor on paper, 3.3 x 5 in., 2008.5.69
87. *View from the Front of W. T. Richards's House on Conanicut Island*, 1882, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.1 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.71
88. *View from the South Piazza of WTR's House on Conanicut Island*, 1882, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.1 x 5 in., 2008.5.72
89. *The Road to the House of W. T. Richards on Conanicut Island*, 1882, watercolor on paper, 3.1 x 4.9 in., 2008.5.73
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Dorrance H. Hamilton in memory of Samuel M. V. Hamilton

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90. *The Road through the Moor, Conanicut Island*, 1882, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.1 x 5 in., 2008.5.78
91. *Looking Up the Bay from Conanicut Island*, 1882, watercolor on paper, 3.1 x 5 in., 2008.5.76
92. *Mackerel Cove, Conanicut Island*, 1882, watercolor on paper, 3.1 x 5 in., 2008.5.75
93. *Some of Our Cliffs, Conanicut Island*, 1882, watercolor on paper, 3.2 x 5 in., 2008.5.77
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Dorrance H. Hamilton in memory of Samuel M. V. Hamilton

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94. *Monadnock Mountain, New Hampshire*, 1883, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.3 x 5 in., 2008.5.86
95. *Head-Water of the Brandywine, near Coatesville, Pennsylvania*, 1884, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.3 x 5 in., 2008.5.92
96. *Off Beaver Tail Light, Conanicut Island*, 1883, watercolor on paper, 3.3 x 5.1 in., 2008.5.88
97. *The Last Rows of Summer, Conanicut Island*, 1883, watercolor on paper, 3.3 x 5 in., 2008.5.89
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Dorrance H. Hamilton in memory of Samuel M. V. Hamilton

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98. *One of Our Neighbors, Conanicut Island*, 1884, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.2 x 5 in., 2008.5.94
99. *"Our Western Frontier," Conanicut Island*, 1883, watercolor on paper, 3.3 x 5.1 in., 2008.5.83
100. *The Children's Tennis Court, Conanicut Island*, 1883, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3.3 x 5.1 in., 2008.5.81
101. *Joseph Wharton's House, on Conanicut Island*, 1884, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, c. 3.1 x 5 in., 2008.5.95
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Dorrance H. Hamilton in memory of Samuel M. V. Hamilton

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102. *Tintagel Castle from the Mainland*, 1878, watercolor on paper, 2.5 x 3.4 in., 2008.5.98
103. *Arthur's Cave, Tintagel*, 1878, watercolor on paper, c. 2.4 x 3.4 in., 2008.5.99
104. *Tintagel Castle from the Beach*, 1878, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, c. 2.6 x 3.4 in., 2008.5.97
105. *The Most Westerly Rocks of Land's End, Cornwall*, 1879, watercolor and Chinese white on paper, 3 x 2.5 in., 2008.5.100
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Dorrance H. Hamilton in memory of Samuel M. V. Hamilton

106. *At Atlantic City*, 1877
oil on canvas, 24 x 20 in.
private collection

107. *Tree Study*, June 1853
pencil on paper, 8.8 x 11.5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

108. *Tree Tops*, n.d.
pencil on paper, 5.6 x 7.2 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

109. *Trees*, June 18, 1853
pencil on paper, 9 x 6.5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

110. *Trees by the River*, July 29, 1859
pencil on paper, 7 x 5.4 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College
from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

111. *Landscape with Trees and Pool*, June 22, 1861
pencil on paper, 5.9 x 8.1 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

112. *Coldspring*, June 18, 1859
pencil and gouache on paper, 5.8 x 7.5 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

113. *Lake Scene with Trees*, May 15, 1853
pencil on paper, 5.3 x 9.5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

114. *Trees and Boulder*, June 25, 1854
pencil on paper, 7.3 x 5.5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

115. *Trees in a Landscape*, June 12, 1858
pencil and Chinese white on paper, 6 x 8.9 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

116. *Trees*, July 4, 1877
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William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

117. *Forest Interior with a Pool*, n.d.
pencil on paper, 6.9 x 10.5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

118. *Tree Study*, n.d.
oil on cardboard, 8.6 x 15.8 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

119. *Country Road with Trees*, n.d.
oil on wood, 8.6 x 15.8 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

120. *Woodland Scene*, 1878
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Mark Twain House & Museum, Hartford, 1957.76.2

121. *Haying near Newport Beach*, 1877
watercolor and gouache on carpet paper, 23 x 37 in.
private collection, courtesy William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

122. *Paradise Valley, Middletown, Rhode Island*, 1877
watercolor and gouache on carpet paper, 24 x 38 in.
Newport Art Museum, Purchase made possible through the generosity of many donors, the descendants of the artist, and the efforts of William and Alison Vareika, 2002.003.001

123. *East Shore of Conanicut Island I, II, III,* n.d.
watercolor on paper, 11.5 x 22 in. (each)
private collection

124. *The Road to Richards's House, Graycliff, Conanicut Island, Rhode Island*, n.d.
watercolor and pencil on paper, 10 x 14 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

125. *"Graycliff," the Artist's Home, Conanicut Island, Rhode Island*, 1894
oil on canvas, 12.1 x 15.4 in.
private collection

126. *Graycliff, Conanicut Island, Rhode Island*, c. 1880
watercolor on paper, 10 x 14.5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

127. *Graycliff, Conanicut Island, Rhode Island,* n.d.
oil on panel, 8.8 x 16 in.
private collection, courtesy William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

128. *Conanicut Island Fields*, n.d.
pencil and watercolor on paper, 7 x 12.5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

129. *Horsehead Rock, Conanicut Island, Rhode Island*, n.d.
watercolor on paper, 8 x 14.5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

130. *Potter's Cove, Conanicut Island, Rhode Island*, n.d.
watercolor and pencil on paper, 12.1 x 24.6 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

131. *Coastal View*, 1888
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William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

132. *Harbor Entrance on Bull Point, Conanicut Island*, 1898
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Collection of Anne and Matt Hamilton

133. *Race the Sea, My Sons*, 1876
watercolor and gouache on paper, 10 x 14.5 in.
private collection

134. *Sunset on Mount Chocorua*, 1873
oil on canvas, 22 x 42 in.
private collection

135. *Moonlight on Mount Lafayette, New Hampshire*, 1873
watercolor, gouache, and graphite on gray-green wove paper, 8.5 x 14.8 in.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of the Reverend E. L. Magoon, DD, 80.1.2

136. *Summer Glow (Mount Lafayette from Coffin Pond, New Hampshire)*, 1877
oil on canvas, 18.5 x 28 in.
private collection

137. *Landscape, Mount Washington from the North Conway Intervale,* 1874
watercolor on paper, 10.8 x 17 in.
Collection of Martin and Carolyn Stogniew

138. *Stream in the Woods at Germantown, Pennsylvania*, August 19, 1868
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William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

139. *Farmhouse and Grainfields, Chester County, Pennsylvania*, c. 1887
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William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

140. *Beach at Beverly Farms, Cape Ann*, 1877–82
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William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

141. *Lighthouse, Annisquam*, n.d.
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William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

142. *View of Twin Lighthouses, Thacher Island, near Rockport*, n.d.
pencil on paper, 10.8 x 14.9 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

143. *Landscape, Canaan, Connecticut*, n.d.
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William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

144. *Landscape, Canaan, Connecticut*, n.d.
oil on paperboard, 8.9 x 15.9 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

145. *Orchard in Spring*, n.d.
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William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

146. *Early Summer*, 1888
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Brooklyn Museum, Bequest of Alice C. Crowell, 32.141

147. *Autumn Leaves*, c. 1870
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William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

148. *Easton's Point, Newport, Rhode Island: Autumn*, n.d.
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private collection, courtesy William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

149. *Easton's Point, Newport, Rhode Island: Winter*, n.d.
oil on panel, 5.5 x 9.3 in.
private collection, courtesy William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

150. *Rowing in Moonlight*, n.d.
pencil on paper, 7.5 x 5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

151. *Alpine Landscape (Grindelwald)*, July 16, 1867
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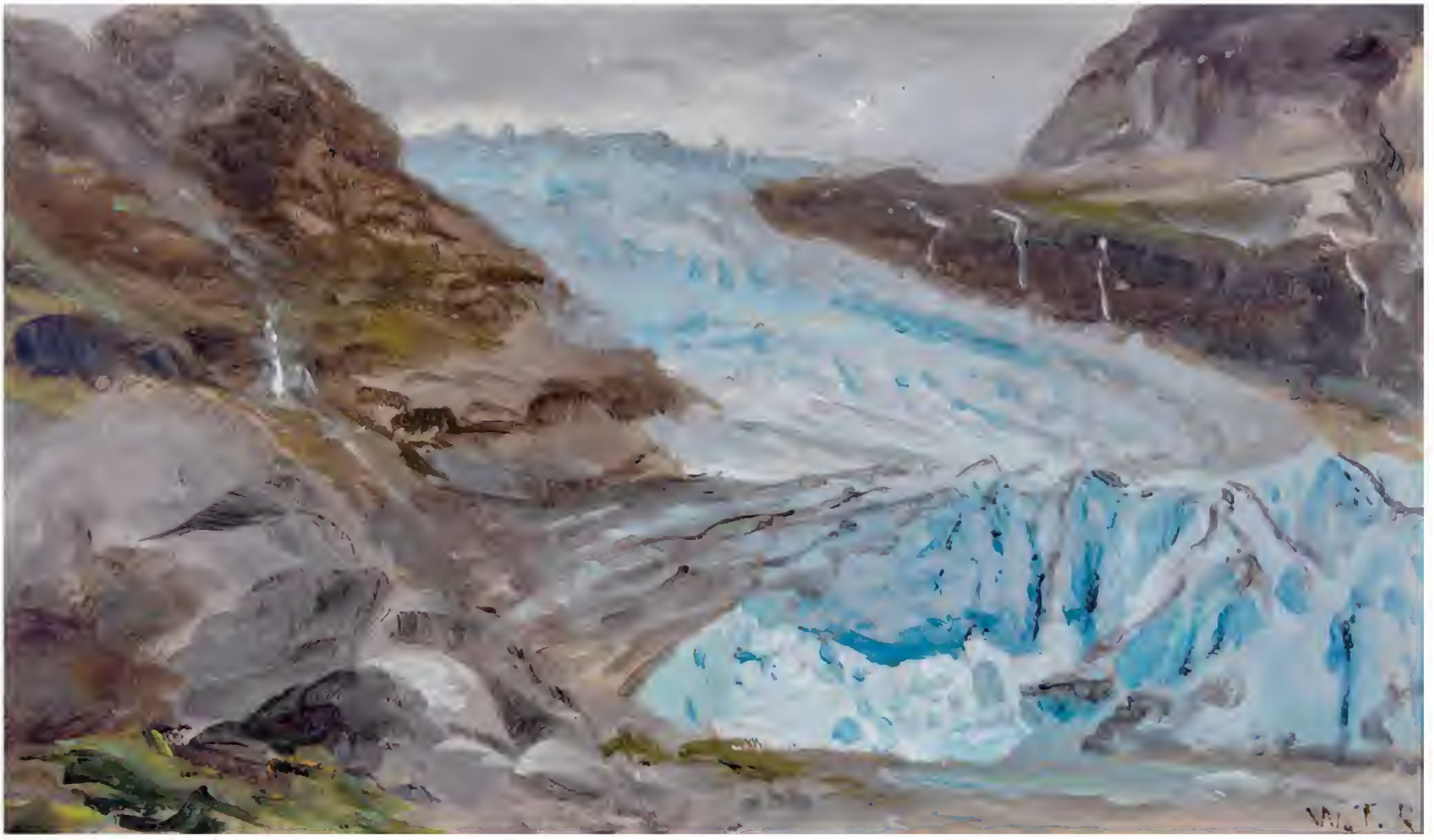
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

152. *Snowy Cliffs, Switzerland*, 1900
watercolor on paper, 5 x 8 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

153. *Lulworth Cove, Dorset, England*, c. 1880
watercolor, gouache, and pencil on paper, 22 x 36.5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

154. *Lulworth Cove, Dorset, England*, c. 1880
watercolor, gouache, and pencil on paper, 3 x 5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

155. *Romsdal Stream, Norway,* c. 1901
oil on canvas, 5.3 x 9 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport



156. *Brikɔdal Glacier, Norway*, c. 1901
oil on cardboard, 5.3 x 9.1 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

157. *Breifond, Norway*, c. 1901
oil on canvas, 5.3 x 9.2 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

158. *Skjolden, Norway*, c. 1901
oil on cardboard, 5.3 x 9.1 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

159. *Guernsey*, c. 1896–97
oil on paperboard, 8.9 x 15.9 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

160. *Guernsey Shore*, c. 1896–97
oil on paperboard, 8.8 x 15.8 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

161. *Guernsey Cliffs, Channel Islands*, 1899
oil on canvas, 34 x 62 in.
Newport Art Museum, Gift of Willard Clinton Warren II and Timothy Matlack Warren, grandnephews of the artist, and other members of the Warren family, 2005.001.001

162. *Bantry Bay, Glengarriff, Ireland*, c. 1880
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McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, Gift of William '74 & Alison Vareika P'09, '15, 2004.12

163. *View of Goat Fell, Isle of Arran, North Ayrshire, Scotland*, n.d.
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William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

164. *Handa Island, Scotland,* n.d.
oil on canvas, 5.4 x 8.7 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

165. *British Coast*, n.d.
oil on paperboard, 8.8 x 15.1 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

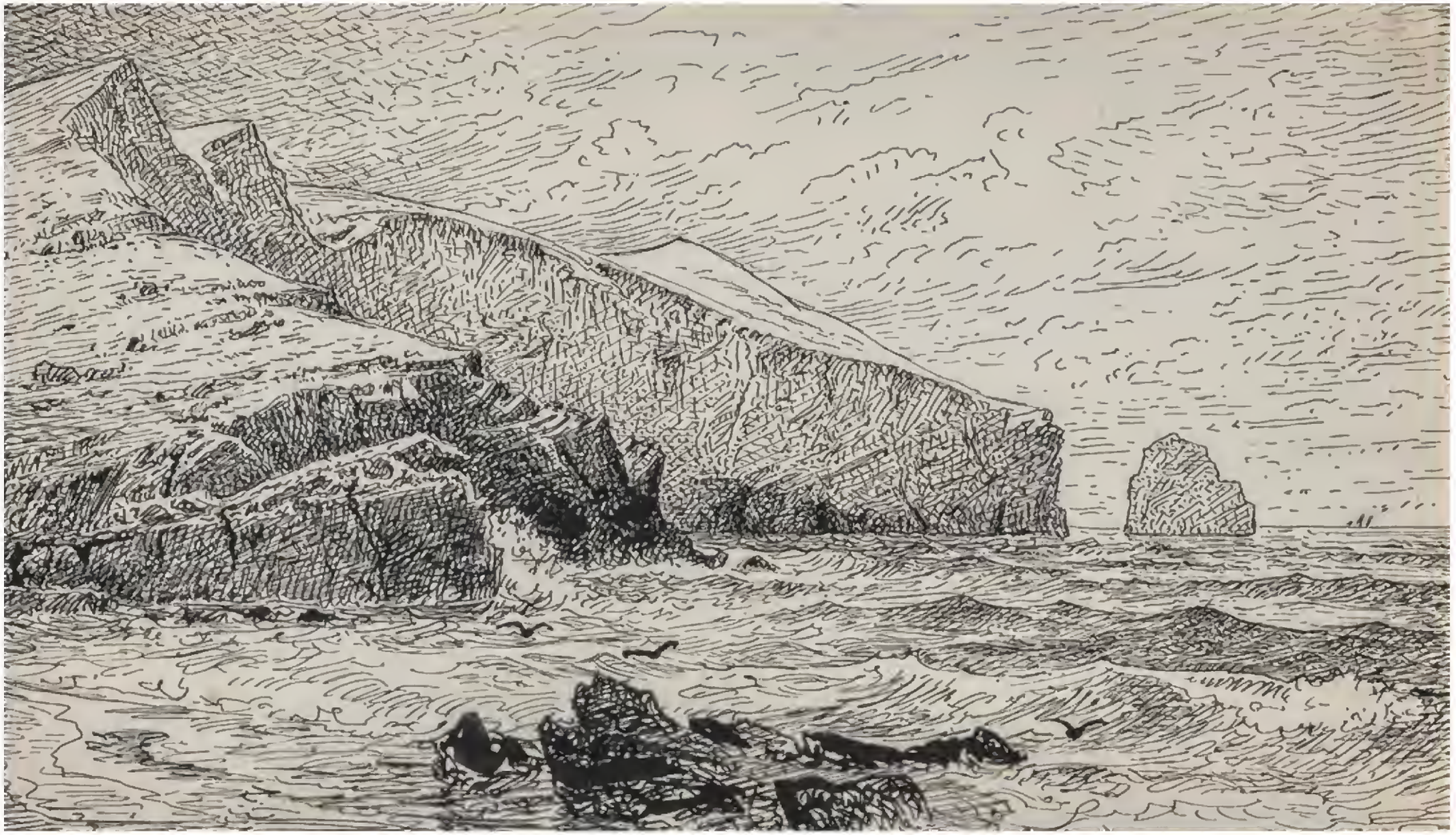
166. *Chalk Cliffs, Isle of Wight*, September 15, 1880
watercolor, gouache, and pencil on paper, 10 x 13.8 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

167. *Cornish Coast*, n.d.
watercolor on paper, 12 x 24 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

168. *Irish Cliffs*, 1891
watercolor on paper, 5 x 8 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

169. *The League Long Breakers Thundering on the Reef*, 1887
oil on canvas, 28.2 x 44.1 in.
Brooklyn Museum, Bequest of Alice C. Crowell, 32.140

170. *Tintagel*, c. 1882–85
oil on panel, 4.6 x 7.1 in.
McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, Gift of William '74 & Alison Vareika P'09, '15, 2004.13



171. *Trebarwith Strand, Cornwall*, c. 1881
pen and ink on paper, 5 x 8.8 in.
McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, Gift of William '74 & Alison Vareika P'09, '15, 2004.14

172. *Kilkee, Ireland*, c. 1891
watercolor on paper, 5 x 7 in.
McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, Gift of William '74 & Alison Vareika P'09, '15, 2004.16

173. *The Otter Cliffs*, 1866
oil on canvas, 36.3 x 29 in.
private collection

174. *Sunset, New Jersey Coast*, 1872
watercolor, gouache, and pastel on paper, 10 x 16 in.
Collection of Martin and Carolyn Stogniew

175. *Shipwreck*, 1872
oil on canvas, 24 x 42 in.
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Henry R. Pemberton, 1961.2

176. *On the Shore*, c. 1872
oil on canvas, 15 x 25 in.
Collection of Martin and Carolyn Stogniew

177. *Sunrise, Atlantic City*, 1873
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private collection

178. *Seascape (Coast of New Jersey)*, 1870
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Davis Museum, Wellesley College, Purchased with funds provided by the family and friends of Patricia Bakwin Selch (Class of 1951) in her honor, 1990.38

179. *Moonlight*, 1878
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Collection of Martin and Carolyn Stogniew

180. *Seashore*, 1881
oil on canvas, 24 x 38 in.
Collection of Edward W. Kane and Martha J. Wallace

181. *Seascape with Beached Ship*, n.d.
watercolor on paper, 7.5 x 14.5 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

182. *Figures on the Beach*, n.d.
watercolor on paper, 6.6 x 12.9 in.
private collection

183. *Beach Scene with Figure and Dog*, n.d.
watercolor on paper, 7.8 x 13.1 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

184. *"When First We Built Our Castles by the Sea,"* n.d.
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private collection, courtesy William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

185. *Schooner and Fog Boats*, n.d.
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William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

186. *Seascape with Moonrise*, c. 1880
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McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, Gift of William '74 & Alison Vareika P'09, '15, 2003.21

187. *Waves in a Cove*, n.d.
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William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

188. *Coastal View*, n.d.
pencil and gouache on paper, 5.6 x 9.7 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

189. *Beach*, n.d.
pencil on paper, 9.3 x 13.9 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

190. *Rocky Shore*, n.d.
pencil on paper, 9 x 14.4 in.
Promised gift to the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College from the family of Ellen P. and Theodore Richards Conant

191. *Newport Coast*, 1893
oil on canvas, 20 x 32 in.
private collection

192. *The Clearing Storm*, 1879
watercolor on carpet paper, 23 x 37 in.
private collection, courtesy William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

193. *Breakers*, n.d.
oil on wood, 5.3 x 9 in.
William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport

194. *Twilight: Horsehead Rock, Conanicut Island in the Narragansett Bay*, 1901
oil on canvas, 22 x 36 in.
Collection of Edward W. Kane and Martha J. Wallace

195. *Seascape*, 1896
oil on canvas, 31.8 x 50.1 in.
private collection

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Linda S. Ferber is senior art historian and museum director emerita at the New-York Historical Society. There she launched *Sharing an American Treasure*, a traveling exhibition program drawn from the Society's own rich collections. Prior to that 2005 appointment, she was Andrew Mellon Curator of American Art at the Brooklyn Museum (now emerita) where she was also chief curator during her tenure of several decades. Ferber has organized exhibitions, published, taught, and lectured on topics including William Trost Richards, the American Pre-Raphaelites, the American Watercolor Movement, the Eight and the Ashcan School, Albert Bierstadt, Asher B. Durand, and the Hudson River School. While maintaining an association with the Society as senior art historian, she is active as an independent curator. Recently she served as guest curator and co-catalogue editor for *The American Pre-Raphaelites: Radical Realists* at the National Gallery of Art. In 2017, Ferber received the Frederic Church Award from the Olana Partnership.

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